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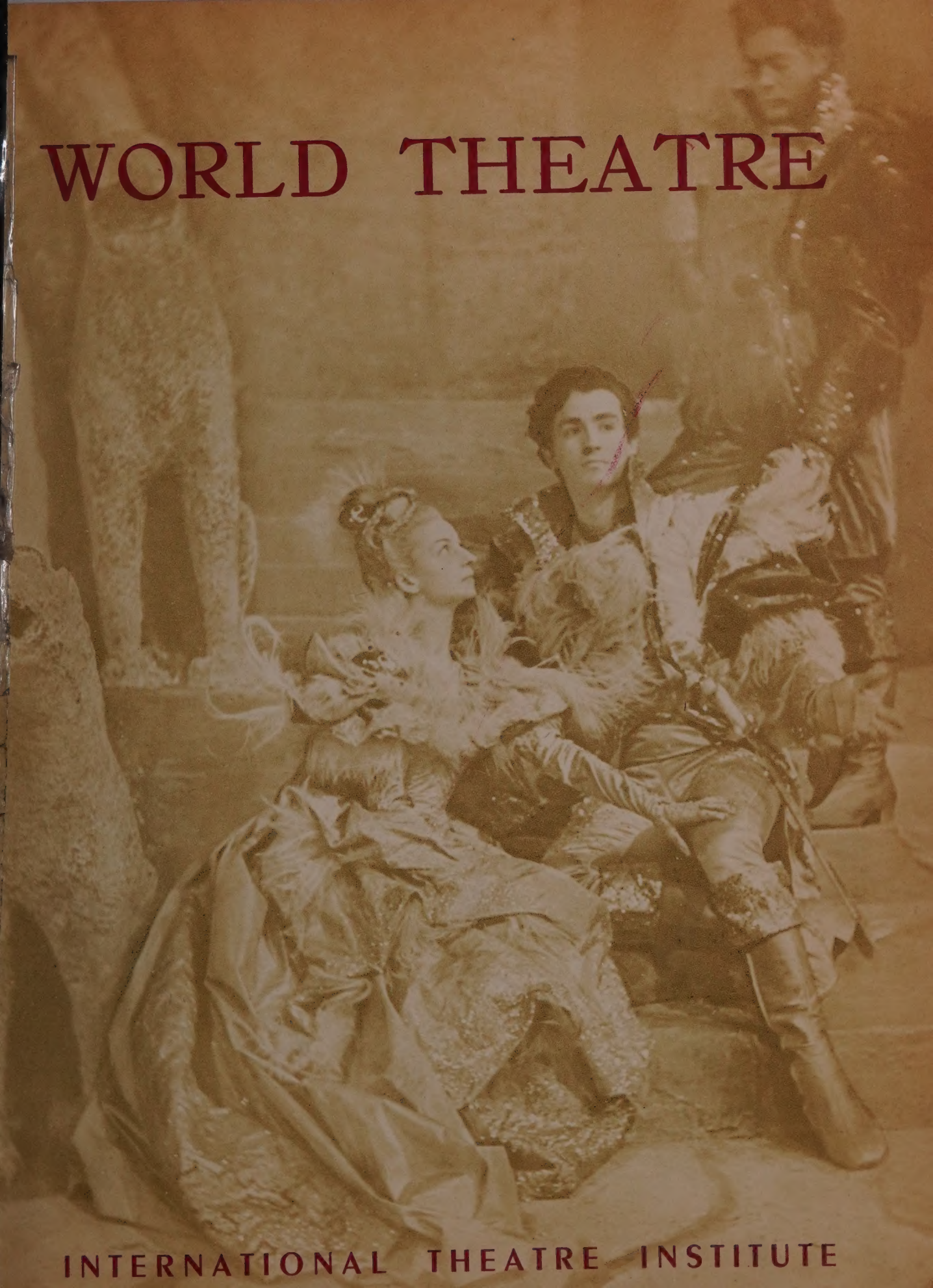
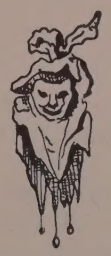


INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE

WORLD THEATRE

VOLUME I - NUMBER I



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ARGENTINE, BELGIUM, CANADA, CHILE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, MEXICO, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, PERU, SWEDEN, TURKEY, UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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ON THE COVER : ORESTES, *by Vittorio Alfieri. Production by Luchino Visconti. Scenery and costumes by Mario Chiari. Eliseo Theatre, Rome. 1949.* Photo Ronald.

Our trial number has been well received. From all corners of the world some of the most eminent men in the theatre have taken the trouble to send us their congratulations and encouragement. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking them.

Two of the letters call for public comment, for each concerns one aspect of the double objective we have assigned ourselves, and which we tried to define in our first editorial : to promote international understanding and bring the peoples of the world together on the spiritual level, and on the technical one, to forge a practical working instrument for those who are interested in the theatre.

The first of these letters comes from a Czech friend, Jan Kopecky, who writes to this effect; " Whoever does not act for peace acts against it. What does your review do for peace?" This reproach, for it is one, touches me personally most keenly. In all good faith I wish that my friend Kopecky would enlighten me. What does he propose? Does he know of any contribution we could make to peace beyond assuring an open door in the matter of theatrical information between hostile parties and strengthening to the limit of our capacity those ties which link men of the theatre in Eastern and Western Europe, despite all political differences? The Sovinformburo sends us photographs and information : we publish them; is not this more efficacious than any declaration of principle? Why are not Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, to name only those two great nations, more prodigal of information and less reticent in their intercourse with us? That is for Jan Kopecky to say.

The second letter reaches us from M. Pierre-Aimé Touchard, General Administrator of the Comédie Française. " World Theatre is just the document we have dreamed of for years," he writes, and adds : " The greater part of your review should be devoted to studies which must be both elementary and complete, for in fact we know nothing about the foreign theatre. No matter if you are obliged to sacrifice more literary articles; other reviews can publish those." This is precious encouragement to follow the path we have already chosen, of renouncing problems of pure aesthetics and sticking as closely as possible to the concrete aspect of documentation and technique. It is in this spirit that the contents of the present number have been planned. We should be glad to have our readers' criticism.

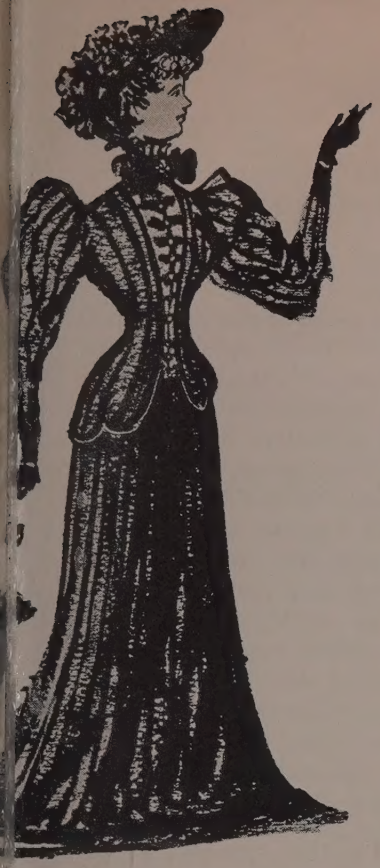
The severity of our purpose will not however prevent our making room for such occasional observations as eminent men of the theatre may favour us with from time to time.

We believe that we shall be fulfilling M. Touchard's desires, and doubtless those of other professionals, by planning to alternate numbers of an eclectic diversity with others centred round some special subject, such as stage decoration, state subsidies or theatrical architecture.

We have already decided to devote our next spring number to " Festivals and Summer Shows", as a kind of forecast of the pleasures in store for theatre lovers the world over in the course of their approaching vacations. It will be at the same time a programme and a documentary.

Let us say no more for the present. Our readers reactions, after the event, will inform us of the suitability of our endeavours.

René HAINAUX.
Editor.



FRANCE PROMOTES RENEWAL

by Jacques LEMARCHAND

stumes by Jean-Denis Malclès for
Gide's " Les Caves du Vatican "

Costumes by Jean-Denis Malclès fo
André Gide's " Les Caves du Vatican

Specialists in the art of war readily agree that the relief of one unit by another is a most delicate and dangerous operation, which requires, more than any other, care and conscience on the part of the commander. In the more general spheres of the art, commanders only dispose of small effectives, and relief is executed imperceptibly in a continuous and surreptitious fashion. Only the art historian, using great circumspection in his statements, can affirm at what moment one force began gradually to take over the positions of its predecessor, while at the same time a future unit came silently and unconciously into being, a unit whose elements begin by struggling, each on their own, in hostile darkness, obliged to vanquish with arms of their own invention, enemies with whom they are ill acquainted, and whom they call enemies merely because they are ahead of them in time. Just because it is impossible to " command " relief, it is all the more necessary to induce it, by weakening as far as possible the resistance which young artists encounter in their efforts at free expression, without coercing this same freedom in any respect.

It is natural that the State should take an interest, that it should try in however small a measure, to soothe its uneasy conscience at being a State, by becoming a Maecenas. This it can only do, as it is doing at the moment, by enlisting suppleness and intelligence, without which its most disinterested help and initiative would appear suspicious and humiliating charities.

The programme of these activities, or rather their bare balance sheet is what we want to set out here.

What the theatre owes in other ways to private enterprise, to the personal sacrifice of managers, producers, actors, designers and stage hands — and even to spectators — must on no account be forgotten. That is another balance sheet to be drawn up if we desire to complete the picture, with any pretentions to fairness, of the deep and vital theatrical activity which exists in France to-day.

The part of the State in artistic matters can, and it seems must, be defined in three words : *to conserve*, *to induce* and *to encourage*. As concerns dramatic or operatic art, it must help the national theatres to fulfil their essential mission, which is the " defence and illustration " of their repertory, and assist them in

researches which it is their duty to undertake in view of enriching their repertory; it must also seek out and encourage the private efforts and individual experiments which are ceaselessly being made both in Paris and the provinces.

This is the task to which the " Direction des Spectacles et de la Musique ", under the guidance of its Director M. Jacques Jaujard, and its Assistant-Director Mlle Jeanne Laurent, has devoted itself for the past five years, or more precisely, since its functions were determined by decree on August 18th 1945.

CONSERVATION.

As regard the conservation of the dramatic and lyrical repertory, the " Direction des Spectacles " exerts its influence in the National Theatres, that is to say, in the Comédie Française (both the Richelieu and Luxembourg Theatres), in the Opéra and Opéra-Comique, (jointly administered as the Théatres Lyriques Nationaux) and in the Palais de Chaillot.

To conserve does not mean to embalm. When it comes to keeping alive from generation to generation the chief masterpieces of our lyrical and dramatic history, to conserve takes on the special sense which it has in a game of backgammon; " to move forward without exposing the adjacent points ". In others words, one must advance, but prudently, without reliquinshing anything that has already been acquired. Spectators of backgammon, who are unacquainted with the rules, tend to think the game slow and the players pusillanimous, and to offer illtimed blame and encouragement, the only effect of which is to hinder the players and spoil the game. To abandon metaphor, there would be something of this presumption, born of haste and incomprehension, in trying to judge at this early date, the effectiveness, of work undertaken in the National Theatres. We can only note, on the one hand, the keen interest manifested by the public in the new productions and revivals of the Comédie Française, (administered by M. P. A. Touchard) to which a constant rise in bookings bears witness, and on the other to the unflagging success of the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique.

It should be mentioned that a Finance Bill of 1946 set classes of dramatic art on a par with classes of singing and music in our national academy of the Conservatoire.

INDUCEMENT.

The most effective method of inducing a work of art is still to commission it, but it is a method fraught with risks which calls for a courageous determination to trust people. It is nevertheless an indispensable means of enriching the repertory, of lyrical works especially, at a time when potential librettists and operatic composers are tempted to stifle their inspiration rather than indulge in abortive creation of operas which have not, in the ordinary course of events, the least chance of being heard. Having reached this conclusion, the " Direction des Arts et de la Musique " began to commission operatic works. A commission in this sense means simply the assurance that the work will be performed under the best possible conditions, that the public and the profession will be made acquainted with it, and that the author will have the chance of exchanging the silence of his study for the enriching experiences of rehearsal and performance.

Among the works due to this initiative, which will remain in the repertory, are *Martine* by Henri Rabaud, produced at Strasbourg in 1947, Marcel Delannoy's *Puck* and Claude Arrieu's *Noé*, produced in 1949, and just recently *La Main de Gloire* by Jean Françaix, which was first given at Bordeaux. For, added to concern for allowing authors to express themselves, is concern for reviving activity in the artistic centres of France which are historically most important. This effort at wide decentralization is unhampered by any narrow nationalistic policy as is shown by the production of Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucrece* at Mulhouse in 1948.

Apart from commissions, prospection was necessary, and with this in view, a national musical competition was inaugurated which, if it does not necessarily reveal a genius or a masterpiece, at least allows the young operatic composers of France to feel they are not abandoned, and that the great silence, in which they might have thought themselves immured, has at last been broken.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

But the chief care of the " Direction des Arts et de la Musique " has been to encourage what already existed and discover what was best in it, with a boldness and ingenuity which have already

born fruit. Three of their undertakings specially worthy of attention for the results they have obtained and the growing interest they provoke, are :

a) THE ASSISTANCE FOR FIRST PLAYS

A Commission entitled " Aide à la Première Pièce " was instituted by Pierre Bourdan on July 10th, 1947. Charles Dullin was, until his death, its very active president. Its aim is to help young authors to get their first play put on. Everyone knows with what misgiving theatrical directors watch a young man enter their office, manuscript in hand, a misgiving unfortunately justified by the fact that scarcely any of them are in a position to take financial risks. Pierre Bourdan thought that this distrust would be softened and might even be turned to sympathetic attention if the young author could announce that his play had been read by a group of people not unwholly unacquainted with the theatre (1). And that furthermore these people had been interested in it, to the extent of advising the State to bear a part of the costs of production.

The job of this Commission is therefore to read the plays of authors who have not yet been produced, and to decide, in view of the credits at their disposal and the estimated cost of production, what sum they can grant in aid.

It is clear that it is not its function to discover infallible commercial hits, that is a director's job : at once more modest and more ambitious, its aim is only to give moral and material support to works of good quality, which are in danger of being stifled by the universal prudence of directors. By this means, about twenty plays have been performed in the last three years, by young authors, or authors who have not previously attempted playwriting, and who unassisted, might have had to wait a long time for the necessary experience of seeing their plays produced. It will suffice to recall here that, among works which we owe to this enterprise, are, Emmanuel Roblès' *Montserrat*, Denis Marion's *Le Juge de Malte*, Gabriel Arout's *Pauline ou l'Ecume de la Mer*, Julien Gracq's *Le Roi Pêcheur*, André Lem's *Le Premier Jour* and Jean Mogin's *A Chacun selon sa Faim*. We are not engaged here in drawing up a prize list, but in showing the eclectic choice of plays, which have been much discussed but the discussion has generally been based on the author's ideas, and rarely on his rights to consideration as a dramatist.

b) THE COMPETITION FOR YOUNG COMPANIES.

Born in 1946, from a proposal of Raymond Cogniat, this competition has in four years grown to a size and importance which its promotor can hardly have anticipated. It filled an obvious need, which was to encourage companies of young actors and producers, both in Paris and the provinces, to pursue their efforts; to make them feel that they were not ignored in the depths of their province, or in their " local " halls, that they could make themselves heard, and that every young company whether it hailed from Carpentras or from the XIIIth arrondissement has within its grasp the Marshal's bâton which Lugne Poe, Copeau and Dullin were never sure of holding.

There is no need to enter into the detailed history of a competition which has had, among other merits, that of sustaining the faith of those dozens of theatrical companies out of which saviours never fail to emerge when an official state of " crisis in the theatre " is declared. A little submerged at first by the flood of competing companies, the organizers of the competition eventually adopted a procedure which seems full of wisdom. A select committee (2) make a choice of all the companies that flock to Paris from every part of the country in the first fine days of June, and ten of them are chosen to compete in public. Their performances are given, not simply before the Jury, but in the Atelier Theatre to which the public also are admitted, so as to give competitors the true atmosphere of the theatre, without which it is so hard to judge a play, and also not doubt to act it. Distributed amongst professionals and amateurs, amongst Parisian and provincial companies, the prizes of the Competition for Young Companies have brought to light names which have in general justified the distinction conferred on them, by the subsequent brilliance of their work. In this roll of honour I would include, among professionals, Pierre Valde (First Prize 1946), Georges Vitaly (First Prize 1947), Sylvain Dhomme (First Prize 1948), André Reybaz and Catherine Toth

★ ——————————————— ★

(1) Nominated by Pierre Bourdan, the members of this commission were : MM. Jean Anouilh, Paul Abram, Gaston Baty, Albert Camus, Charles Dullin, Paul Gaillard, Marcel Herrand, J. Lemarchand, Pierre Renoir, and P.A. Touchard. M. Jean Anouilh having resigned, was replaced first by Alexandre Arnoux and later by Charles Vildrac.

(2) This select committee, chosen from members of the Jury, is composed of : MM. Paul Abram, Pierre Barbier, Marc Beigbeder, Jean de Beer, Yves Bonnat, Raymond Cogniat, André Frank, Jean-Jacques Gautier, Hubert Gignoux, Jean-Denis Malclès, Paul-Louis Mignon, Jean-Francis Reille, Pierre Valde.

(First Prize 1949), Philippe Kellerson (First Prize 1950), and among amateurs, Henry Demay as director of the " Equipe ", the " Théophiliens ", a group of Sorbonne students to whom Professor Cohen has communicated his ardour, the " Theatre Antique de la Sorbonne ", and the young " Comédiens de Rennes ". Finally, the competition has contributed materially to the provincial successes of the " Grenier de Toulouse ", directed by Maurice Sarrazin, of which we shall have more to say later, as well as to the popularity of the " Nouvelle Compagnie de Bordeaux ", of the " Rideau de Tours ", and others.

c) DRAMATIC CENTRES IN THE PROVINCES.

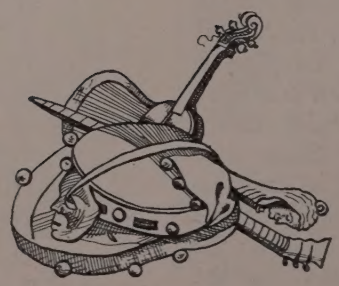
It is probably in this direction that the greatest effort has been made, and the one which naturally takes longest to show results. The aim is nothing less than to answer the centripetal force which projects all the best elements towards Paris, by a centrifugal one which will send out to the Provinces, or maintain there, theatrical directors, actors and producers.

I believe that one day the detailed history of these dramatic centres will be written, as a prologue to the history of a renaissance in the provincial theatre. It will be a magnificent history, the scope of which may already be apprehended. It is only possible here to give a sketch of the enterprise, a bare plan which leaves out of account the courage, audacity, self-sacrifice and pure love of the theatre which have animated its organizers from the start, as well as their shrewdness, their prudence and intelligence, without which qualities no undertaking can prosper.

There are at present four dramatic centres in France. The " Centre de l'Est ", directed by André Clavé, which is the eldest and dates from 1947, the " Comédie de Saint-Etienne ", directed by Jean Dasté, the " Grenier de Toulouse ", in the hands of Maurice Sarrazin, and the " Centre de l'Ouest ", entrusted to Hubert Gignoux, which being two years younger, figures as the Benjamin but has nevertheless contrived to produce six plays in the course of one season. These centres have a double objective : to acquaint provincial audiences with the French and foreign classics, of which touring companies can only offer them fragments, and to learn from the provinces that Paris does not represent the whole of France, even where dramatic art is concerned, and moreover that Paris is made by what the provinces bring her.

In underlining the activities of the " Direction des Arts et de la Musique " in France, I have simply wanted to point out that if one desires to promote artistic renovation, it is better to trust men than administrative regulations. It is better to run risks than to wall oneself behind the security of an administration. It is better to help men to live than to lecture them on the best way of living.

JACQUES LEMARCHAND



MONTSERRAT, *d'Emmanuel Roblès. Mise en scène de Vandéric. Décor de Michel Juncar. Théâtre des Mathurins, Paris. 1948.* Photo Lipnitzki

MONTSERRAT, *by Emmanuel Roblès. Produced by Vandéric. Set by Michel Juncar. Mathurins Theatre, Paris. 1948.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

A CHACUN SELON SA FAIM, *de Jean Mogin. Mise en scène et decor de Raymond Hermantier. Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, Paris. 1950.* Photo Lipnitzki.

A CHACUN SELON SA FAIM, *by Jean Mogin. Set and production by Raymond Hermantier. Vieux Colombier Theatre, Paris. 1950.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

CENTRES DRAMATIQUES DE PROVINCE

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LES ÉPOUSAILLES, *de Gogol. Mise en scène de M. Sarrazin. Décor de Pierre Lafitte. Le Grenier de Toulouse, 1949.*

THE MARRIAGE, *by Gogol. Produced by M. Sarrazin. Set by Pierre Lafitte. Le Grenier de Toulouse, 1949.*

☆

LE MIRACLE DE L'HOMME PAUVRE, *de Marján Hemar. Mise en scène d'André Clavé. Décor de F. Gaillard Rissler. Centre Dramatique de l'Est, 1949.*

LE MIRACLE DE L'HOMME PAUVRE, *by Marjan Hemar. Directed by André Clavé. Set by F. Gaillard Rissler. Eastern Dramatic Centre, 1949.*

PROVINCIAL DRAMATIC CENTRES

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NOCES NOIRES, *de Jean Lescure. Mise en scène de Jean Dasté. Décor de Raoul Ubac. Comédie de St-Etienne, 1948.* Photo Lipnitzki.

NOCES NOIRES, *by Jean Lescure. Produced by Jean Dasté. Set by Raoul Ubac. St-Etienne Comedy Theatre, 1948.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

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En bas à gauche :

UN CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE, *de Labiche. Mise en scène de Maurice Jacquemout. Décors et costumes de Jean Le-Moal. Centre Dramatique de l'Ouest, 1950.*

Lower left :

AN ITALIAN STRAW HAT, *by Labiche. Produced by Maurice Jacquemont. Settings and costumes by Jean Le-Moal. Western Dramatic Centre, 1950.*

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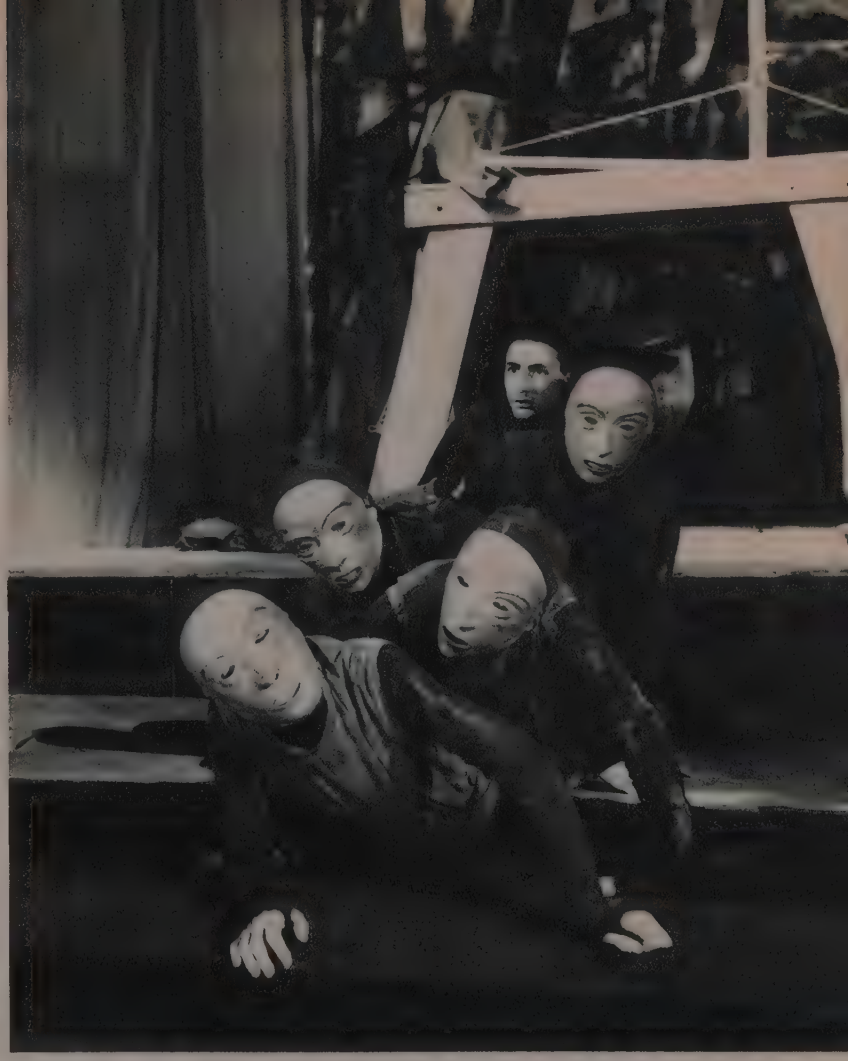
En bas à droite :

L'ÉCHANGE, *de P. Claudel. Mise en scène de Hubert Gignoux. Décor et costumes de Serge Creuz. Centre Dramatique de l'Ouest, 1950.* Photo Bernand.

Lower right :

L'ECHANGE, *by P. Claudel. Produced by Hubert Gignoux. Set and costumes by Serge Creuz. WesternDramatic Centre, 1950.* Photograph by Bernand.



CONCOURS DES JEUNES COMPAGNIES
COMPETITION OF YOUNG COMPANIES

LE MAL COURT, *d'Audiberti. Mise en scène de G. Vitaly. Décors et costumes de Marie Viton. Compagnie Georges Vitaly. Lauréat 1947.* Photo Lipnitzki.

LE MAL COURT, *by Audiberti. Produced by G. Vitaly. Settings and costumes by Marie Viton. George Vitaly Company. First Prize 1947.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

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Catherine Toth dans HOP! SIGNOR, *de Michel de Ghelderode. Compagnie du Myrmidon. Lauréat 1949.* Photo Lipnitzki.

Catherine Toth in HOP! SIGNOR, *by Michel de Ghelderode. Myrmidon Company. First Prize 1949.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

JUNON ET LE PAON, *de Sean O'Casey, adaptation et mise en scène de P. Kellerson. Décor de F. Gaillard Rissler. Compagnie P. Kellerson. Lauréat 1950.* Photo Lipnitzki.

JUNO AND THE PEACOCK, *by Sean O'Casey. Adapted and produced by P. Kellerson. Set by F. Gaillard Rissler. Compagnie P. Kellerson. First Prize 1950.* Photograph by Lipnitzki.

THE ENGLISH STAGE AND ITS POETS

by Philip HOPE-WALLACE

Costume by John Piper for Envy, in THE QUEST.

Costume by John Piper for Pride, in THE QUEST.

There has always been poetry in the English theatre. If all drama is essentially poetic in intention, being primarily a search for the way to say something, then the English search has been as long and as rewarding as any. Why then do people speak of the recent revival of interest in poetic drama as a commercial novelty or as representing a volte-face on the part of the British public? To view such plays as "*The Cocktail Party*" or "*Venus Observed*" in this light is to misunderstand them. Certainly, it is pleasant to see such pieces holding their own and outlasting boulevard drama and vacuous prose farces at neighbouring theatres, indeed to find such plays competing in the open market, and rewardingly, for audiences who might never dream of buying a book of poetry or taking one off the shelf of a lending library.

But the briefest glance back over the history of the English theatre would take the edge off any surprise that this should be so. What needs explaining, rather, is how the intense English love for poetry neglected the stage for a whole century or more, went rather into lyrical poetry, with a taste for spectacle and singing and the masque usurping and doing service for real dramatic rhetoric.

If we look merely at the nineteenth century we shall see apparently on the one side an "actor's" theatre which was largely poetic, with, of course, Shakespeare as the main part of the fare, and on the other hand an "author's" theatre, dealing, but in prose, with themes of contemporary importance. It is not that we then lacked poets, but (perhaps because we never had a National Theatre which would have felt obliged to create "classics" where there were none!) our great poets, after Dryden, ceased to make the grade as dramatists. Perhaps if Otway had lived; perhaps if Dryden (immensely popular and successful in his day) had had a slightly more enduring or universal appeal, the story would have been different.

The obvious fact is that though Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne and even Thomas Hardy or John Masefield might, "on paper" represent a school of poetic drama, not one of them stood in relation to the English stage of their time as did Victor Hugo or Alfred de Musset to the theatre of Paris. If Tennyson's "*Queen Mary*" had done for English drama what "*Hernani*" did for the French theatre, no one would now dream of speaking of a "revival of interest in poetic drama". It would merely be a question of continuing a tradition.

Not that the French theatre did not experience a decline at one point; yet there the tradition endured. We must reflect that in England (though we may think our poets, as poets, incomparably greater) we had, not only no Victor Hugo, but no Molière nor even a Rostand. The plays of our poets belong, in fact, to literature, rather than to dramatic literature.

How far is Shakespeare to blame for this? It is true to say that so great a figure coming so early in our national literature tended to eclipse his successors. If Shakespeare shows the English audience's love of playing with words for their own sake in its richest form, it is also necessary to remember that in most other countries there was no such interest nor any such genius at the same epoch. This early start may indeed have been dramatic poetry's misfortune. It made us too ready to assume that there would always be some dramatic poet at hand (so that even today less official encouragement is given to the experimental drama in England that in many much younger nations); it also, subtly but surely, discouraged successors. Shakespeare not only towered in the back-ground; he could almost always be used for present purposes, more easily and more cheaply than a "new" dramatist. And this ended by the creation, as was said, of an "actor's" theatre, of ranting at its worst, of great classical playing at its best, which, like the handful of operas in today's repertory, consisted in endless revivals of famous and effective poetic dramas; while the drama of contemporary ideas either borrowed from France or became an "author's" theatre which in reaction failed to satisfy the still unassuaged public appetite for words and the sensuous pleasures of the ear.

This English delight in verbal excitement, so strongly marked in the Elizabethan theatre — a common man's theatre, by the way, every bit as much as a courtier's theatre — derives from the peculiar richness of the English language. In no other language is it possible to say the same thing in so many ways! It is, at the very least, a double language, with a double vocabulary (far larger than that of most languages, especially by comparison with French) a language part French, part Anglo-Saxon in origin, but admitting of fantastic scope for sheer verbal juggling, for the "conceit", so called, which is found so plentifully in such plays as "*Love's Labour's Lost*".

As suggested, partly owing to the fact that "there was always Shakespeare" to canalise and absorb this fascination in words, and partly owing to the accidents of history, the joy in verbal expression found ever fewer outlets in contemporary drama. It has also to be remembered that in the middle of the 17th century the tradition of the living theatre was broken by the Puritan suppression of the playhouses and that the drama which was eventually restored shaded off, when it was grandiose, into spectacle with much music, and when it was contemporary comedy, into bright, brittle, elegant trifling, often making its appeal only to a very metropolitan audience, a comedy which was basically antipoetical in spite of the polish of its language.

Not that poetic drama, as we saw, ceased to be written, but it never seriously influenced the more vital part of the contemporary drama during the nineteenth century; while the great acting names were being made either in Shakespearian revivals, or mere fustian melodrama, modern playwriting consisted in imitation of the French models, and, by about 1860, had reached a deplorably flat and prosy level.

But what is really astonishing is that, when reaction set in and a great new school of modern dramatists emerged, under the leadership of Bernard Shaw, dealing with contemporary thought and indeed using the stage as a schoolhouse, not to say a pulpit, it was to Ibsen that they paid their highest respects. The fact is— a fact of accident in translation as much as anything— that Ibsen, that essentially poetic giant of the nineteenth century drama, appeared to his English disciples as important in almost every other way; as moralist, as sociologist, as a naturalist even (natural- "*the Wild Duck!*"). Shaw himself might and did write with a winged pen, in prose certainly, but prose, as in the concluding speeches of "*Back to Methuselah*" so lovely to the ear that it almost qualifies as poetry. But the lesser disciples took here a turn away from,— and not, as they should have done had they really understood Ibsen,— towards poetry. Modern drama concerned with problems of contemporary living became more and more prosaic and poetic drama, such as it was, became removed, in the average audience's view, from the theatre of actuality. The dramas of Pinero are typical— "*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*" is *Hedda* commercialised, turned into prose. In Galsworthy and Granville-Barker the element of moral and social reform in Ibsen re-emerges in wholly unpoetic, though admirably actable, guise. Right down to J. B. Priestley in our own time— and even he has been known to throw in a few lines of poetry, be they only quotations from Shakespeare — the idea that serious popular drama was something plain and prosy persisted.

Of course it would be an oversimplification to suggest that there was no popular poetic drama. Quite apart from the revivals of Shakespeare (whom Mr. Shaw most significantly attacked while denouncing at the same time the well-made, formula play of French design, the Sardou play, whose strength of dramatic construction he condemned, confusing it quite unfairly with its lack of vital social message), there was much new poetic drama constantly being written. There were the plays of Stephen Philips with splendid sonorous blank verse which were taken very seriously in some quarters. After the war there were large and enthusiastic audiences for Flecker's "*Hassan*" or the sterner and more practical verse chronicles of Drinkwater. All the same, much of the public's love of verbal magic, which ought to have been satisfied by the contemporary theatre, had to find other outlets; in opera, in the music-hall jingle, even in the adored "*Russian Ballet*". Poetic drama, pure and simple, tended to be thought of as something altogether divorced from popular taste, a wan and Maeterlinkian groping and wailing on dark and draughty stages.

The Irish revival too had a little to do with this. Ireland has always played an enormous role in the English theatre for, as the Irish do not cease to remind

us, three of our best playwrights (Sheridan, Wilde and Shaw) were Irishmen. But the nationalist revival in the period of Ireland's break-away led naturally to an interest in Celtic origins for their own sake and in the Irish myth which was much cultivated for patriotic reasons. The poetic plays of Synge and Yeats partook in the nature of things of this Maeterlinkian manner; nothing— though they had their passionate adherents— could be expected to appeal less strongly to the bouncing confidence of the Edwardian era in England. The Irish gift of eloquence was, however, not lost to the drama in England and came back after the 1914-18 war in the rolling rhetoric of O'Casey, writing in prose to be sure, but a fountainhead of dramatic rhetoric just the same.

In the uneasy years between the wars, however, and especially in the thirties, poetic drama, for better or worse, remained a special category. It was to be found at the Mercury Theatre (a tiny côterie audience) and less often at the Westminster Theatre. The audience was almost all of one class, with a common background of culture and education. It was perhaps a growing audience— one cannot predict what it might have become without the interruption, not to mention the stimulations of the war years. The British Broadcasting Corporation, often blamed for neglecting poetry, in fact was helping to create an audience which was capable of using its ears to some purpose— an education especially valuable in a world dominated by the cinema and at a time when eyes were incomparably better trained than ears. The importance of the radio as a field for experiment in poetic drama, and especially by such poets as Louis MacNiece and Edward Sackville-West, would have to be taken into account in any large scale review of poetry in our contemporary theatre. It was the radio, as much as the fashionable Germanic expressionism, which paved the way to popular, if limited acceptance of such plays by the poets Auden and Isherwood "*The Dog Beneath the Skin*" or "*The Ascent of F 6*", which combined the satire of revue, and the fanciful and fashionable tricks of production with a highly personal, if disabused, poetic utterance.

Meanwhile at the Mercury Theatre a crucially successful experiment was made with the transference to the stage of "*Murder in the Cathedral*" specially written for performance in Canterbury Cathedral by T.S. Eliot. It was found to make, on the ordinary stage, a strong and essentially dramatic appeal. Powerful and popular as a philosophically treated biography of a well know figure— the assassinated Archbishop, Thomas à Becket— it was also verse which had the highest qualities of dramatic rhetoric without ceasing to be personal, penetrating and revealing. Eliot used, like many others, a chorus. This caused some people, who confused religious feeling with church modes, to complain that the manner was simply that of a litany, but they might have remembered the enormous influence of the vernacular church service in the history of English drama. The public however was not in any doubt that Eliot was using words as words had not successfully been used in the English theatre for a long time.

> "We know of oppression and torture,
> We know of extortion and violence,
> Destitution and disease,
> The old without fire in winter,
> The child without milk in summer.
> Our labour taken away from us,
> Our sins made heavier upon us."

The progeny of this play was large. Not always happily, religious sentiments and poetic diction in combination were thought sufficient. A post-war success which showed how the leaven was still working was Ronald Duncan's "*This Way to the Tomb*", which caught up something of Eliot's mediaeval mystery manner with the satirical charade style of A. Auden and Isherwood. Duncan subsequently made a version of Cocteau's "*The Eagle has Two Heads*" and has lately published and seen played a poetic tragedy, "*Stratton*", which seems in danger of failing to make its theme and language sufficiently clear for immediate effect in the theatre.

Eliot's second dramatic effort, "*The Family Reunion*", went, not to the mystery play, but the greek classic for its frame : or rather, one should perhaps say he gave a classical stamp, a touch of Oresteia, to a modern theme. Here again, but in subtler ways, he mixed choral speaking with a deliberately flat, conversational tone which could easily take a modern joke in its stride. But one could not help thinking of Eliot here, with his new and unquestionably potent dramatic language, as a man who has forged a key but has no lock in which to insert it.

With the latest of his plays that lock has been found. This is hardly the place for a criticism of the much discussed "*Cocktail Party*" whose thesis brings to terms with modern drawing-room comedy some of the oldest and wisest tenets of the faith which Eliot holds and which, incidentally, coincides with the teachings of the psychiatrist Jung : in effect "Unhappiness is missed vocation". For Eliot, vocation may be merely the wisdom of healing a personal breach as in a broken marriage, which we can do because "every moment is a fresh beginning" and no one is doomed. On the other hand you may find, as does the young cocktail-drinking adulteress, that you are a candidate for sainthood and martyrdom. An obvious criticism of the play is that this character is not sufficiently developed in the earlier scenes for her conversion to matter to us as much as it should, and there remains as well a good deal of tiresome ambiguity as to the status of the priest — psychiatrist figure — and the "guardians". But generally Eliot may be said to have realised in large measure his dramatic task : it "works" in the theatre.

What is signifiant, however, is that in the matter of poetic diction he has moved as far as possible towards meeting, on its own ground, the ordinary prose conversational theatrical convention of our day. The language is sometimes, and to many ears sounded, as it was meant to sound, not at all unlike Londsdale, or Maugham. Never can a modern poetic play have seemed less self-consciously "different" or "artistic", in the sense of being couched in language outside the vocabulary which the ordinary playgoer enjoys. Yet

the effect of verse in isolating attention and heightening feeling was none the less marked.

Meanwhile we must also take note of another name which has been much canvassed in this connection : Christopher Fry. This young and gifted poet really first caught the general public's fancy with " *The Lady's Not for Burning* " which had started life in a private club theatre, but was mounted and played by John Gielgud and continued to draw mixed audiences to Shaftsbury Avenue all through one of the finest summers on record.

Here was what the public least expected of a " poetic " play, a pervasive gaiety which could easily hold a candle to Bernard Shaw and yet with its cascading similes, its verbal vivacity, its adjectival fireworks, satisfied also some craving that, as has been suggested, has always existed in the public since the days of the Elizabethan " conceit ", a craving which had had no comfort at all in the sermonising prosy realism and naturalistic speech of all too many modern commercial successes. To speak plainly, the dramatic construction of " *The Lady's Not for Burning* " was weak and amateurish enough and when it came to the main arguments about life and death between the lady (a witch who resisted the idea of being a public victim) and a soldier of fortune (so world-weary that, not unlike the Playboy of the Western World, he was prepared to swear to murders to find rest on the gallows) the verbal felicity curdled quickly and clogged the dramatic machine.

Mr. Gielgud having made a success with this piece, Sir Laurence Olivier next commissioned a play from Mr. Fry which duly appeared as " *Venus Observed* ", acted and produced, not necessarily in the most perfect and the definitive way, by Sir Laurence at the St. James's Theatre. Expectation had run high and was not cheated, though it is fair to say that the play again struck many people as unpardonably weak in stagecraft and sustained finally by nothing much more than a lingering, indefinable autumnal charm (a mood which combined with the relish for words sent half a dozen critics back to *Love's Labour's Lost* for a criterion). The theme is of an ageing amorist, his former mistresses invited to a country house partly to witness an eclipse of the sun, the transit of a bright new star, a girl with whom the ageing amorist suddenly finds himself in rivalry with his son, and the resignation which finally comes to him, after some fanciful adventures, including an incendiary passage with a jealous mistress. Perhaps Mr. Fry was less successful than in his other play in placing his characters firmly before us; perhaps in this production they were not ideally cast. At all events only the central figure of the amorist, (also an astronomer and a duke for good and symbolic measure) really took on independent life. But the word "play" was there and in abundance. There was wit, grace, frivolity abounding and, when occasion demanded it, a quite unusual atmospheric quality.

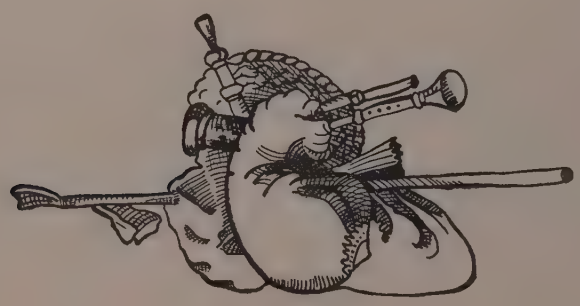
" They should
Be here, At eleven-twenty-nine we're to have
The total eclipse of the sun, to which I've invited them.
The mouth of the moon has already begun to munch! "

" Daylight, you see, is shamming twilight. Nature
Is being made a fool of. Three or four stars, there,
You can see them wince, where only a moment earlier
Morning was all serene. The crows, with much
Misgiving, talk themselves into their trees. Even
The usually phlegmatic owls
Care a hoot or two. "

Some critics, poets among them, quickly pointed out that this kind of thing was facility itself and in no sense constituted dramatic poetry of the deeper and more lasting sort. But the point is that it " takes " on the stage. The audience simply purred with satisfaction, until it began to feel the theme of the hero's disillusion growing anaemic. But they did not object to the caprice or the illogicality of the dramatic formula. The public, it would seem, is in full reaction against the well-made play, and at a time when the dispersed effects and fluttering technique of a comedy such as Bridie's " *Daphne Laureola* " can pass without censure, weakness of this order in Fry's play is not likely to put off a public greedy for his verbal puff pastry. It is the very public which would have adored Rostand's " *Cyrano* " and even did enjoy it in those translations which inevitably made it almost a different play.

But whether Fry is a not-yet unfolded genius or merely a passing supplier of trifles such as the public craves, the success of his pieces, in this year, when the English theatre is taking itself— if not being taken— more seriously than ever, is a portent as well as a milestone in the long history played by poetry on our national stage.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE



THE MOTHER, *by Gorki. Realist Theatre, Moscow (1933).*

LA MÈRE, *de Gorki, au Théâtre Réaliste de Moscou (1933).*

ANTECEDENTS OF THEATRE-IN-ROUND
ANTÉCÉDENTS DU THÉATRE EN ROND

The Intimate Theatre of Norman Bel Geddes (1922), as it would have appeared during a performance.

L'Intimate Theatre de Norman Bel Geddes (1922), tel qu'il serait apparu lors d'une représentation.

The Octogonal Theatre of University of Miami (105 seats)

Le Théâtre octogonal de l'Université de Miami (105 places).

The Penthouse Theatre. View showing the disposition of seats round the playing area (172 seats).

Le Théâtre de l'Appentis à l'Université de Washington. Vue montrant la disposition des sièges autour de l'aire de jeu (172 places).

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE, *by Owen Crump. Produced by Margo Jones. Theatre '50' Dallas. Only the playing area is completely lit. The audience, though quite close to it, is in shadow.* Photograph by Squire Haskins.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE, *d'Owen Crump. Mise en scène de Margo Jones. Théâtre '50' Dallas. Seule l'aire de jeu est parfaitement éclairée. Les spectateurs sont dans l'ombre, et cependant tout proches.* Photo Squire Haskins.

THE SEAGULL, *by Tchekov. Produced by Margo Jones. Theatre '49' Dallas.* Photograph by Squire Haskins.

LA MOUETTE, *de Tchékov. Mise en scène de Margo Jones. Théâtre '49' Dallas.* Photo Squire Haskins.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, *by Shakespeare. Karamu Theatre, Cleveland (Ohio).* Photograph by Hastings.

LA MÉGÈRE APPRIVOISÉE, *de Shakespeare. Théâtre Karamu, Cleveland (Ohio).* Photo Hastings.

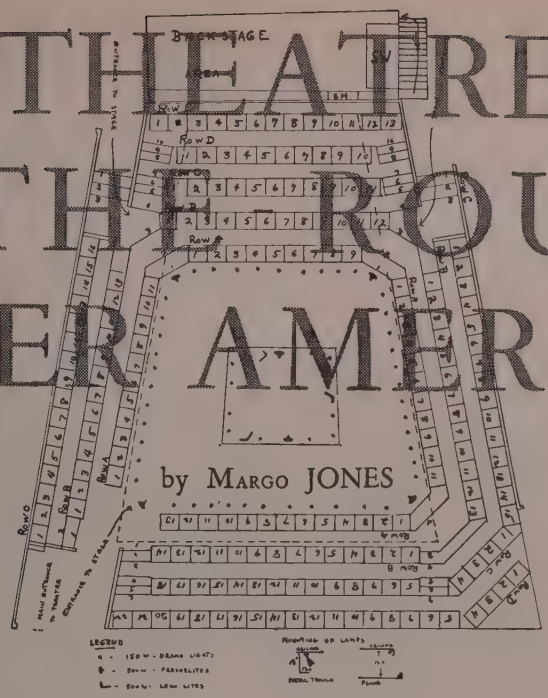
A DAY ON THE CAMPUS, *by Robert Fades and Barry Lipkin. Produced by Fred Koch Junior. University of Miami.*

A DAY ON THE CAMPUS, *de Robert Fades et Barry Lipkin. Mise en scène de Fred Koch Junior. Université de Miami.* Photo Fleming.

THE GENTLE PEOPLE, *by Irwin Shaw. Produced by Nina Vance. Alley Theatre, Houston (Texas).* Photograph by Walden.

THE GENTLE PEOPLE, *d'Irwin Shaw. Mise en scène de Nina Vance. Théâtre Alley, Houston (Texas).* Photo Walden.

THEATRE IN-THE-ROUND OVER AMERICA



by MARGO JONES

So far all efforts to suscitate the "theatre of to morrow" have had a common principle : to reinforce the contact between stage and spectators. It is the battle horse of all theorists, no matter what their proposals, and likewise of all architects.

The chief characteristic of arena staging, as it is practised nowadays in England and America, is precisely the disturbing intimacy which it establishes between actors and audience.

Miss Margo Jones directs the Theatre of Dallas. She is about to publish a book entitled "Theatre-in-the-Round", and no one could be better qualified to discuss the matter.

WE have today in America a theatrical medium which is spreading like wildfire, opening the door to the possibility of starting professional theatres in every city, presenting a hopeful view for theatrical progress at a time when the theatre building situation is virtually at a standstill. This medium is theatre-in-the-round. Although its potentialities are only now beginning to be realized, it is not at all new; in fact, we can trace it back to our ancestor, the cave man.

A number of years ago, Robert Edmond Jones, lecturing at the University of California, gave a hypothetical but vivid account of how story-telling first became drama in the days of the Stone Age, of how the leader of the tribe told his people about the killing of the lion in terms of action. And before he started telling and showing them, he invited them to sit around him in a circle where he could reach out and touch them.

The origin of theatre-in-the-round in the United States seems to have no direct connection with such European experiments as Nikolai Okhlopkov's Realistic Theatre in Moscow, but there is no doubt that Kenneth Mac Gowan's books, *The Theatre of Tomorrow* (1921) and *Continental Stagecraft* (written in collaboration with Robert Edmond Jones in 1922), were influential in inciting American theatre people to try new techniques; for in these volumes MacGowan described Reinhardt's productions at the Circus Schumann and the Grosses Schauspielhaus of Berlin as well as his work at the Redoutensaal of Vienna, Copeau's first presentational theatre at the Vieux Colombier, the staging of plays at the Dalcroze School in Hellerau, and an imaginary theatre-in-the-round production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Cirque Medrano of Paris, which Robert Edmond Jones supplied with a memorable sketch.

In the meantime, another one of our great designers, Norman Bel Geddes, after a great many experiments, designed in 1922 what became known as Theatre Number 14, an intimate playhouse seating 800 and constructed on the same principle as an European circus with a circular stage in the center of the building. Theatre Number 14 was to have been erected for the Chicago World's Fair but this project never materialized.

As early as 1916, theatre-in-the-round was utilized as a staging method here and there in the United States but only in sporadic efforts until Gilmor Brown, in 1924, began to produce plays in a large room in Pasadena, California, with the actors surrounded by the audience, no platform stage and a minimum of equipment. Five years later, Gilmor Brown built the Playbox, and although it retained the intimate style, the form was made more flexible (the action of the play can take place either in the central area of the room or in any or all of the three alcoves which are raised a step from the floor).

The first consistent use of the theatre-in-the-round technique was made by Glenn Hughes, who, feeling the necessity of an additional playhouse in which his students at the University of Washington could gain acting experience, opened a theatre in the penthouse of a Seattle hotel in 1932. The venture was so successful that in 1940 the University decided to construct the Penthouse Theatre (named in honor of its original location), the only structure of this kind in America.

Since then numerous college and community theatres all over the country have adopted this method, but the first professional theatre to utilize it was Theatre 50 in Dallas, Texas (which opened in 1947 under the name Theatre 47, changed every year to remain contemporary at all times).

In the last three years other professional groups have followed our example— in Atlanta, Georgia, Jacksonville, Florida, and most recently in New-York City— and several summer stock companies have been producing musical comedies in tents with circular stages. At the time of writing this a project is afoot to organize a chain of theatres-in-the-round to be located in the principal hotels of some of our larger cities. The idea has been released and the movement is gathering momentum.

The two most obvious advantages of theatre-in-the-round are the intimacy that is established between actor and audience, and the economical way in which the theatre can be started. Many theatre people have dreamed of having resident professional theatres, but the big stumbling block has always been the place in which to do it. Theatre-in-the-round seems the simplest and most practical solution to convert the dreams into realities and establish resident professional theatres wherever leadership and imagination can be found.

I do not believe that theatre-in-the-round sets up any limitations. What cannot be offered the audience in terms of scenery is supplied by excellent acting, interesting costumes and handprops and especially by imagination. Nor does the medium limit the selection of plays. For a while some authorities believed that only drawing room comedies or plays with one setting and few characters could be done, but it has since then been proved that Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Wilde, Chekhov, Shaw and O'Casey fit admirably well into this medium if the director has sufficient skill to stimulate the imagination of the audience. Plays with any kind of locale, with multiples ettings, with many scene changes and with large casts can be put on in theatre-in-the-round.

The medium does not affect the style of the play at all. We are by no means restricted to realistic plays. Among the plays we have done in our four seasons at Theatre 50 are two Shakespearean comedies and one tragedy, Molière's *The Learned Ladies*, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, a highly stylized production of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and O'Casey's very non-realistic *Cock-A-Doodle Dandy*. On the other hand, we have handled realism effectively in new modern light comedies and serious plays as well as in classics like *Hedda Gabler*, *The Sea Gull* and *Heartbreak House*.

I have a firm policy of doing only new plays and classics with an emphasis on the new script. I feel that a violent stand must be taken on this issue because if we are to create a fresh and vigorous theatre, audiences must be allowed to participate in the discovery of new playwriting talent and it is imperative that every theatre produce new plays. At the same time, it is important to keep alive the masterpieces of the past and to let these serve the audience as a standard of excellence by which to judge the new play.

To start a theatre-in-the-round all that is required from a physical standpoint is a room or a tent or any place large enough to seat the spectators and leave a sizeble area for the playing space. Of course room must be provided for a switchboard, a box office, a foyer and most of the other facilities

needed in a conventional theatre. Above all, the place must look and feel like a theatre.

Theatre 50 seats only 198 spectators, but I believe intimacy could be maintained with a seating capacity of 500 or 600. Norman Bel Geddes' design for Theatre Number 14 allows for 800 seats, and I would say that this is the maximum number possible, provided a careful seating arrangement is planned. I do not believe, however, that such a theatre could have more than six rows without violating the intimacy of the medium.

The first row is at the same level with the playing area in our theatre, and I believe this is a better arrangement than raising either the stage or the audience with a platform. I have seen the latter arrangement in some arena theatres and I find that it detracts from the intimacy, for the audience enjoys knowing that it is in the same room with the actors. If the people in the front row feel this, it is passed on to those in the other four or five rows. Each row must be graded to ensure that every seat in the house has equally good sight-lines.

From the playing area there must be exits and entrances in the form of aisleways, the length of which should be proportional to the size of the playing area; an extremely long aisleway will seem incongruous. It is possible to get along with two aisleways; four would be better; six would be ideal, since they would facilitate a variety of entrances and the simultaneous entrance or exit of a large crowd.

The shape of the playing area should be in harmony with the room. Ours is trapezoid because that is the shape of our room, but Bel Geddes has a circular stage in his design and Glenn Hughes built an elliptical area in his Penthouse Theatre. Since it may be difficult to build new theatres for a number of years, the most important factor to keep in mind is that the seating arrangement and lighting equipement have to be adapted to the shape of the room, whether it is square, rectangular, circular or elliptical.

The size of the playing space will also vary according to the size of the room. The Penthouse Theatre's stage is 12 feet by 18, for example, while ours is 20 by 24. If I were building such a theatre I would want the dimensions to be at least 28 by 28 or 30 feet in diameter (as Bel Geddes suggests in his design) if the stage is to be circular, in order to allow for a greater distance between the audience and the borderline created by the lighting. (In all the existing theatres of this type there is an inevitable spill of light on the spectators, mostly because of lack of space).

Directing in theatre-in-the-round does not present any major problems. It is, of course, different in several respects from work on the proscenium stage, but I firmly believe that a good director in a conventional theatre will have no trouble adapting his technique to arena staging.

There are more dimensions in this medium and the play has to look good from four sides. The back view and the side view become as important as the front; hence, the director is wise to adopt a bird's eye viewpoint; that is, he should try to visualize the production from above. With this in mind he conceives his stage picture as it will look from all angles. When one starts directing in this medium, the tendency is to move around constantly; although it is prudent to follow this procedure from time to time, a director with experience in theatre-in-the-round will automatically begin to see all sides and all angles as he watches the play.

Every detail of expression and movement becomes more significant in this type of theatre since the audience catches it all. The director must demand of his actors an even greater concentration and honesty in performance than he would on the conventional stage. He must remind actors— those who are not familiar with the medium— that they must not tone down their performances merely because this in an intimate theatre. They must project their voices because there is always a portion of the audience to whom their back is turned, and yet they must not be too loud for those whom they are facing.

An actor should never be given a movement simply to vary his position and give the audience a different view. Every movement must be completely motivated by the play as it is on the proscenium stage.

Since exits and entrances at the beginning and end of a scene have to be made in the dark, they must be as thoroughly rehearsed as the play itself. The use of an illuminated tape or paint has been found helpful in some arena theatres so that the actor can find his way without difficulty.

With the exception of the aisleways, which have to be utilized in some productions if suggestions of settings are called for, there is no such thing as a weak or a strong area in central staging. Establishing focus is, therefore, a minor problem although it frightens many a neophyte director. The focal point is different for the various segments of the house, but the entire arena is the focus. Emphatic focus can be gained by putting an actor on his feet.

Sword play is rather difficult in this theatre because the audience can be so easily frightened

by it. In our production of *Romeo and Juliet*, however, we staged the fight scenes very carefully and managed to make them effective without causing fear among the spectators. Until very recently we felt that it was almost impossible to have gunshots on stage unless the playing area was large and the shot could be taken at a considerable distance from the audience, but even this has been successfully accomplished in the current production of New-York's Arena Theatre.

Scenery, as it is understood in the conventional theatre, cannot be used. The proscenium stage asks the audience to believe the existence of the fourth wall. We make a greater demand on the imagination of the theatre-goer; we ask him to believe the existence of all four walls. Occasionally, however, a set piece or a large prop is essential to the action of the play. The stage on which Nina performs in Act 1. of *The Seagull* was placed at one of our entrances with a draw-curtain in front of it; a scaffold on which a man was to be hanged was erected (for one of our new scripts) at the end of one aisleway.

Furniture should be arranged so that there are as many playing areas as possible and so distributed that every member of the audience will get a good view at some time during the play. All chairs and sofas should have very low backs or no backs at all and every piece of furniture must be quite low. It is not advisable to place lamps or vases on tables of regular height because they are likely to obstruct the sightliness. It is possible to stage outdoor scenes as well as interiors with bare suggestions of the setting. It is also possible to use simultaneous sets (we had four of them in one play : two interiors and two exteriors, separated only by lighting effects). Scenes can be changed within an act by rapid work or by camouflaging (covering furniture pieces with burlap, for instance, can change a livingroom into a saddle house very quickly).

Hand-props, as well as furniture, must be very authentic because the audience can see every one of them at close range. In a period play this applies to books and newspapers as much as to chairs, decorations and bric-à-brac. Settings and properties can be as simple or complex as the play requires : *Twelfth Night* was done with three benches; Tennessee Williams' *Portrait of a Madonna* was executed very realistically in a room cluttered with collected objects, clothes and papers.

Lighting is tremendously important in this medium. It is the curtain (and it can be every bit as exciting to bring the lights up as to raise a curtain), it is the creating of the mood, it is the change of scenery. Our lights are mounted on two canopies made of metal sheeting which are placed over the playing area. Our fifty drama lights (the type used for displays) are mounted on universal swivel sockets so that they can be turned 180 degrees. We also have three Lekos to cover the aisleways, six Fresnel lights for special effects (motivating lights and blending), two projection machines and several small spot lights for pin-spotting or special effects. The switchboard from which they are operated is in a control booth, over the heads of the last row of spectators; it is from that vantage point that the stage manager supervises the performance.

Music is also a very important element. In most cases it provides a curtain along with the lights and, at the same time, aids in creating the mood of the play. Music which has to be played on the stage is difficult to fake; in most instances if a musical instrument has to be used by a character, the actor must learn to play it.

Costumes must be elaborate, authentic and beautifully executed. Like the Greek, the Elizabethan, the Oriental or any theatre which has been practically devoid of scenery, theatre-in-the-round depends a great deal on the costume to give the feeling of period or atmosphere.

Very little make-up can be utilized, and the motto is that the audience must never be aware of it. If an actor has to be aged, it is possible to do it, but the make-up has to be very subtly designed and applied.

There is no miracle in presenting a play in this medium. And it can be as exciting as it is in any other type of theatre if the play is good and the production matches it. Theatre 50 was established as a theatre-in-the-round because it was a way to start at once instead of waiting until a playhouse could be built; but although it began in this form as a necessity, it has continued in it by choice. Perhaps in the future the flexible theatre will be the ideal playhouse, but for the time being it is important to create the theatre of tomorrow today. We have taken a step in this direction in Dallas, and I believe that if such resident professional theatres are established throughout the world, we will have a great theatre Renaissance in the second half of the twentieth century.

MARGO JONES

CONTEMPORARY GERMAN SPEAKING DRAMATISTS IN THE ZÜRICH SCHAUSPIELHAUS

by Oskar WÄLTERLIN

The choice of a repertory and of a company of actors out of which a "style" will grow — such are the essential tasks of a theatrical director. Consequently the man who sets out as the chronicler of his own theatre risks the charge of narcissism.

Yet from every living experience lessons can be drawn, which are of use to others. Too great a reserve is culpable. One should not always toil in solitude, without telling any one what one is doing, or attempting to do.

German plays are very little known in the world at large; I mean those written in the last few decades. This was inevitable, and political events are responsible for it. But now the time has come to separate the corn from the chaff.

It is perhaps an obligation of the Zürich theatre to draw attention to certain works of distinction which have given our stage its special character. By limiting ourselves to the " constellation " of authors who constitute our repertory, we no doubt exclude many other plays and playwrights. But the very principle of the " constellation " is not devoid of interest.

We must first however elucidate this conception of a " constellation ", with all it entails, by describing the strange spiritual position in which our theatre was situated. We can speak of it without false modesty, for this position was due less to our merits than to a fatality, or mission, imposed upon us. Our duty was to respond to the call.

Switzerland is often called a turn-table. We can stretch a friendly hand in all directions, and the rivers which spring from our mountain ranges link us with all countries. The Rhine flows to the North Sea and Atlantic, the Rhone leads to the Mediterranean. The southern watershed of the St. Gothard mingles its waters with those of the Bernina, on their course to the Adriatic. While the river Inn links the Engadine with the Danube and the Black Sea. The Alpine peaks, over which for centuries our people have stood guard, are the meeting point of the cultures of East and West, of North and South. Four languages flourish freely in our midst, and those who speak them enjoy equal rights. This diversity preserves us from nationalistic excesses, and our constitution, supplemented by a series of tacit conventions, creates an atmosphere in which no minority can feel oppressed.

Our country has not known the horrors of war, but our people have been aware of, and have dreaded, the evils which it brings. We have trembled for the liberty of the world, for the inviolability of the human conscience. Our own duty as men of the theatre was to strengthen our will to spiritual resistance, so that no outside aggression could in any event destroy it. We could not limit our repertory to works outside of time, whose value is eternal, although eternal value has often a strange actuality in practice. We had to lend an ear to all the messages of our time. They reached us from all sides and in all languages, broaching the problems born of conflict and revolt against oppression.

Most of these plays made a great impression on our audiences. Their echo lived on, and our theatre built up a living repertory, and a faithful public.

The actors' share in the common enterprise was decisive. Where the dialogue is simple and

direct, the attitudes and impersonations of the actors must match it. Truth requires no bombast. These accents of truth were all the more sincere in that our actors were expressing their own individual anxieties and personal aspirations. There were Swiss actors returned from countries where thought was no longer free; Germans and Austrians who had escaped their fate, and were waiting among us till their chains should be broken.

After the war, we realized that we must give back to the German speaking peoples the legacy entrusted to us. The plays thus returned to their native land enjoyed a renewed popularity. That was to be expected. But it was also to be foreseen that they would be less well received in other countries.

We had hoped on the other hand, that once hostilities had ceased, the desks of German dramatists would be unlocked for us. We expected manuscripts out of which would fly battle cries and clamourous indignation. But it seems that the young authors were dumb in their distress.

Except for one, whose play has been the rounds of all the theatres. Its author was a soldier, who died from war injuries without ever seeing his play produced. His name was Wolfgang Borchert, and the play is called *Draussen vor der Tür* (Before the closed door). The demobilized soldier returns to his ravaged countryside, where he fails to make a living. He knocks at a number of closed doors : the woman he loves, his old comrades in arms, his parents who had gone over to the totalitarian regime, all escape him. Even death rejects him. He tries to drown himself, but the current throws him back upon the bank. What is left to him but nothingness ?

This play echoes the cry of distress of thousands of human beings. It is carved into expressive tableaux, with the lighting of a nightmare.

A misapprehension allowed Max Christian Feiler's play *Heinrich VIII und seine sechste Frau.* (Henry VIII and his Sixth Wife) to be acted in Germany in the middle of the war, for it was thought to be a satire on the English monarchy. It was soon observed however, from the reactions of the audience, that German magnates were its real butt. It was then banned, but thanks to a distinguished cast, it had its hour of popularity with us, and has recently been revived with success in Munich.

Carl Zuckmayer's play *Des Teufels General* (The Devil's General) was written in America. Before the war its author had been one of the leading lights of the German Theatre. He is now an American citizen. His play was first produced in Zürich, and has since conquered every German stage. It has the accent of truth, which is surprising when one considers that it was written across the ocean. The hero is an Air Force General, who has embraced the career of arms through vocation, but this career involved allegiance to a political party which he detests. The original of this character is well known, and I believe I am right in naming Udet. The conflict between conscience and military duty forms the basis of the play. The General rebels, in the course of his beguiling vicissitudes, and helps some of his friends to escape.

Zuckmayer possesses the art of inventing situations and animating dialogue. His language, which is spontaneous and direct, captivates the audience. It is also full of subtleties. His witticisms reveal a deep understanding of the popular mind. No one was better qualified to write the end of Gerhart Hauptmann's *Herbert Engelmann.* He is of Hauptmann's school, although he has blazed a trail of his own.

His plays are numerous and extraordinarily varied. One of his heros is Belmann, a Swedish poet and singer, of whom he draws an engaging portrait. This play was produced in Zürich in 1938. Among his heroines is Barbara Blomberg, the mistress of Charles V. Her sorrows and tribulations are set against a background of historical events which supply the framework of the intrigue. *(Barbara Blomberg* was produced in Constance and Zürich in 1949). Besides his works based on national and popular themes, Zuckmayer has written some shorter and less ambitious plays. *Katharinas Knie* (Katherine's Knee) sets before us the jostling world of the circus. *Der Fröhliche Weinberg* (The Joyous Vintage) transports us to the author's native country, the vineyards of the Rhine. The prestige vouchsafed to uniform inspires *Hauptmann von Köpenick* (Captain Köpenick) which is irresistable. Finally, in a new play, to be produced shortly, entitled *Der Gesang in Feuerofen* (Song of the Hearth), Zuckmayer gives a poetical transposition of resistance activity.

A Swiss, Max Frisch, has given a personal impression of the war. His play *Nun singen sie wieder* (At last they sing again) was written imme-

diately after cessation of hostilities, and produced in Zürich in 1945. Frisch, as a distant spectator, reconstructs intuitively the war and all its inhuman consequences. He possesses warmth, pity and understanding. His dialogue has sensitiveness and a poetic quality. His characters and their actions are on a high plane, and have a universal significance.

The first play Frisch ever wrote, *Santa Cruz*, was put on in Zürich in 1946. In it the author is already master of his style. A little later he gave us an allegory, *Die chinesische Mauer* (The Wall of China) in which he expresses his view of our times. The figures of international literature join forces with the Poet, and with a princess, to wrench power from the hands of the tyrant.

Since the war Frisch has sought contact with vanquished Germany. His play *Und als der Krieg zu ende war* (When the war was over — Zurich, 1948), proved a fertile ground of controversy. It is the story of a German woman whose officer husband goes into hiding at the beginning of the occupation. The author takes a very personal view of the problem of German war guilt.

A new play by Frisch, *Graf Oederland* (Count Oederland), will be produced in Zürich in the course of the 1950-1951 season. The author stresses the " perpetuum mobile " which he sees as the desease of our time.

Other German writers, exiled like Zuckmayer in the United States, also wrote war plays. Franz Werfel, for instance, who figured in the expressionist movement, composing *Der Spiegelmensch* (The Man with a Mirror) and who subsequently drew modern themes from historical subjects : *Juarez und Maximilian* (Juares and Maximilian), *Das Reich Gottes in Böhmen* (The Kingdom of God in Bohemia) and *Paulus unter den Juden* (Paul among the Jews), also told in a colourful and humorous play, his experiences as a refugee : *Jakobowsky und der Colonel* (Jacobowski and the Colonel — Zürich, 1944). There was Ferdinand Brückner, whose best known plays are *Elisabeth von England* (Elisabeth of England) and *Verbrecher* (The Criminal), and who in *Die Befreiten* (The Liberated) portrayed the vicissitudes of the resistance movement in Italy at the time of liberation. Georg Kaiser, whose best work is related to the expressionist movement, takes up the theme of violence again in *Der Soldat Tanaka* (The soldier Tanaka), set in Japan, and also on the eternal theme of Amphitryon, *Zweimal Amphitryon* (The Double Amphitryon).

But of all the plays inspired by the war, the most considerable is certainly *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (Mother Courage and her Children) by Bert Brecht, first played in Zürich in 1940. Bert Brecht is undoubtedly the most remarkable figure in the contemporary German theatre. He is also a distinguished theorist. He reverts to the epic theatre and his example has enlisted disciples, although by nature he is solitary and an individualist. His scepticism of all traditions and conventions it pitiless. Just as Wedekind of old moralized against morality, so Brecht's purity and piety rest on the conviction that human ethics, and religion even, are nothing but fakes.

His style is naturally concise. He does not hesitate to suspend the action, advance to the footlights, and deliver a provocative couplet. He does not bow to the normal canons of dramatic art, and cares little for so-called realism. A number of his works display the techniques which made the universal success of " The two-pence-halfpenny Opera ".

With cruel humour, he presents in a series of rapid tableaux, the destiny of Mother Courage, a " cantiniere " of the Thirty Years War, who survives the destruction of everything she cares for in the world. The play developes in an atmosphere of inevitable natural cataclysm, from which man only escapes through the most primary instinct of self-preservation.

For Brecht man is a weakling, led away by his own good will, which is defeated by the inherent perversity of human nature.

Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan (The Good Man of Se-Tchouan) first produced by our theatre in 1942 is a Chinese legend adapted in the Brecht manner. The gods discover only one kind heart on earth, that of a woman of the streets who, to escape the cruelty of her kind, disguises herself in male attire.

Galileo-Galilei (Zürich, 1943) has historical foundation, but *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht* (Mr. Puntila and his Valet) is a fantasy. A big Finnish landowner shows generosity while he is drunk, but disavows his kindness as soon as he regains lucidity.

A new Brecht play is expected next winter, *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis* (The Chalk Circle of the Caucases) in which a humble servant saves her master's child. She devotes her whole life and love to it, but naturally it is taken from her by an edict of justice.

Brecht wants to open our eyes and destroy our illusions. He shatters and destroys, but not from nihilism. His aim is to clear the ground, to throw down the old facades and exterminate the rot which lies behind them.

A similar task is attempted, with a lighter touch, by the Austrian dramatist, Alexander Lernet-Holenia. He writes short satirical pieces, in which society is mocked, but he is also capable of reaching the heights of poetry. We have by him, a *Saül* and an *Alcestis*, which were both given in Zürich in 1946.

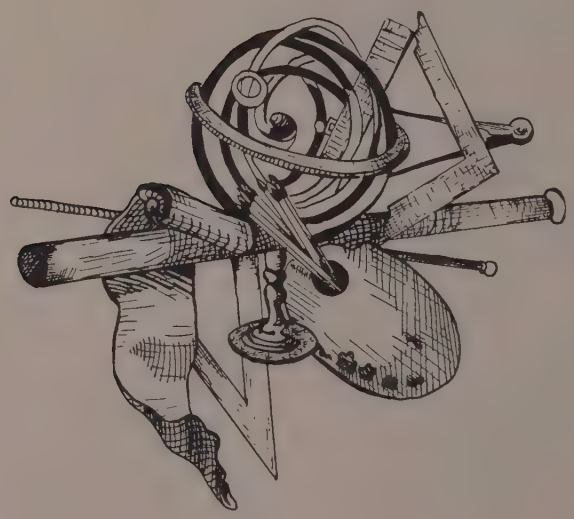
Swiss authors are extremely active, and two names in particular emerge from their midst : Cäsar von Arx and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The former, nearly all of whose plays were first produced in Zürich, has in the last two of them, *Land ohne Himmel* (Land without Sky, 1944) and *Brüder in Himmel* (Brothers in Christ, 1947), given a modern bearing to historical themes, while in *Romanze in Plüsch* (Romance in Plush, 1941), he used dialectics to render contemporary complexities in the manner of Kaiser.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt has a more anxious and nervous nature. He depicts the chaos which threatens us, and which he feels at hand, in terrifying colours : *Es steht geschrieben* (It was written, Zürich, 1947) and *Der Blinde* (The Blindman, Bâle, 1948). To this impending chaos he opposes a spirit of synthesis in *Romulus der Grosse* (Romulus the Great, Bâle, 1949); this play has comic elements which verge on the grotesque. What Dürrenmatt has to say is never idle.

We venture to hope that this enumeration of plays and authors will awaken some interest in non-German speaking countries. The subjects treated by our authors, such as the conflict between political power and the individual may not seem very cheerful. But can the theatre remain cheerful and lighthearted when danger threatens us on every side?

We are far from despising gaiety in the theatre, but we believe that the noblest duty of dramatic art is to furnish men with strength and courage to keep faith, whatever happens, with the ideals of humanism.

OSKAR WÄLTERLIN

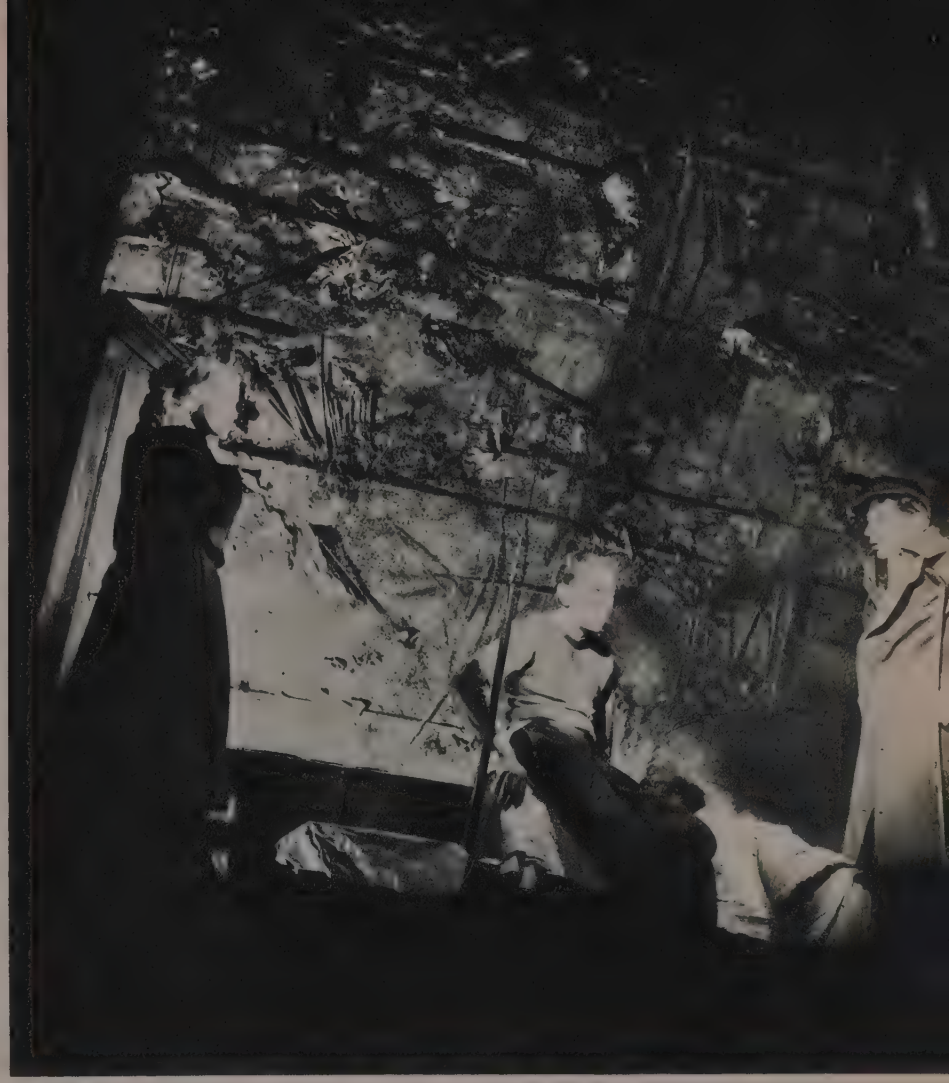


DRAUSSEN VOR DER TÜR *(Devant la Porte fermée), de Wolfgang Borchert. Mise en scène de Pinkas Braun. Décor de Teo Otto. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1948.* Photo Peter Zimmermann.

DRAUSSEN VOR DER TÜR *(Before the closed door), by Wolfgang Borchert. Directed by Pinkas Braun. Set by Teo Otto. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1948.* Photograph by Peter Zimmermann.

DES TEUFELS GENERAL *(Le Général du Diable), de Carl Zuckmayer. Mise en scène de Heinz Hilpert. Décor de Caspar Neher. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1946.* Photo Peter Zimmermann.

DES TEUFELS GENERAL *(The Devil's General), by Carl Zuckmayer. Directed by Heinz Hilpert. Set by Caspar Neher. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1946.* Photograph by Peter Zimmermann.



Die chinesische mauer *(La Muraille de Chine), de Max Frisch. Mise en scène de Léonard Steckel. Décor de André Perrottet van Laban. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1946.*
Photo Peter Zimmermann.

Die chinesische mauer *(The Wall of China), by Max Frisch. Produced by Léonard Steckel. Set by André Perrottet van Laban. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1946.*
Photograph by Peter Zimmermann.

Herr puntila und sein knecht *(Monsieur Puntila et son Valet), de Bertolt Brecht. Mise en scène de Kurt Hirschfeld. Décor de Teo Otto. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1948.*
Photo Peter Zimmermann.

Herr puntila und sein knecht, *(Mr. Puntila and his valet) by Bertolt Brecht. Produced by Kurt Hirschfeld. Setting by Teo Otto. Schauspielhaus, Zürich. 1948.*
Photograph by Peter Zimmermann.

ORAZIO COSTA

UN TRAMWAY NOMMÉ DÉSIR, *de Tennessee Williams. Mise en scène de Luchino Visconti. Décor de Zeffirelli. Théâtre Eliseo, Rome. 1949.* Photo De Antonis.

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, *by Tennessee Williams. Directed by Luchino Visconti. Setting by Zeffirelli. Eliseo Theatre, Rome. 1949.* Photograph by De Antonis.

Au recto :

ORESTE, *de Vittorio Alfieri. Mise en scène d'Orazio Costa. Décor et costumes de Valeria Costa. Théâtre des Arts, Rome. 1949.* Photo Press-Photo.

Over leaf :

ORESTES, *by Vittorio Alfieri. Directed by Orazio Costa. Setting and costumes by Valeria Costa. Arts Theatre, Rome. 1949.* Photograph by Press-Photo.

EURYDICE, *de Jean Anouilh. Mise en scène de Luchino Visconti. Décor de Mario Chiari. Théâtre Quirino, Rome. 1949.* Photo De Antonis.

CRIME ET CHATIMENT, *de Dostoïevski, d'après l'adaptation de Gaston Baty. Mise en scène de Luchino Visconti. Décor de Mario Chiari. Théâtre Eliseo, Rome. 1946.* Photo Ghibli.

EURYDICE, *by Jean Anouilh. Directed by Luchino Visconti. Setting by Mario Chiari. Quirino Theatre, Rome. 1949.* Photograph by De Antonis.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, *by Dostoïevski, adapted by Gaston Baty. Directed by Luchino Visconti. Setting by Mario Chiari. Eliseo Theatre, Rome. 1946.* Photograph by Ghibli.

SOFONISBA, *de Trissino. Mise en scène de Giorgio Strehler. Décor et costumes de Giulio Costellacci. Vicenze. 1950.* Photo Vajenti.

SOFONISBA, *by Trissino. Directed by Giorgio Strehler. Set and costumes by Giulio Costellacci. Vicenza. 1950.* Photograph by Vajenti.

LES GÉANTS DE LA MONTAGNE, *de Pirandello. Mise en scène de Giorgio Strehler. Décors de Ratto. Costumes de Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro, Milan. 1947.* Photo Signorelli.

THE GIANTS OF THE MOUNTAIN, *by Pirandello. Directed by Giorgio Strehler. Settings by Ratto. Costumes by Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro, Milan. 1947.* Photograph by Signorelli.

LE CORBEAU, *de Carlo Gozzi. Mise en scène de Giorgio Strehler. Décor de Ratto. Costumes de Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro, Milan. 1948.* Photo Interfoto.

THE RAVEN, *by Carlo Gozzi. Directed by Giorgio Strehler. Set by Ratto. Costumes by Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro. Milan. 1948.* Photograph by Interfoto.

RICHARD II, *de Shakespeare. Mise en scène de Giorgio Strehler. Décor de Ratto. Costumes de Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro, Milan. 1948.* Photo Signorelli.

RICHARD II, *by Shakespeare. Directed by Giorgio Strehler. Settings by Ratto. Costumes by Colciaghi. Piccolo Teatro, Milan. 1948.* Photograph by Signorelli.

JULES CÉSAR, *de Shakespeare. Mise en scène de Guido Salvini. Décor de Giulio Costellacci. Théâtre Romain de Vérone. 1949.* Photo Parolin.

JULIUS CAESAR, *by Shakespeare. Directed by Guido Salvini. Set by Giulio Costellacci. Roman Theatre, Verona. 1949.* Photograph by Parolin.

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES, *de Molière. Mise en scène d'Alessandro Brissoni. Décor et costumes de A. et M. Brissoni. Capri. 1950.* Photo Bosio.

L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES, *by Molière. Directed by Alessandro Brissoni. Set and costumes by A. and M. Brissoni. Capri. 1950.* Photograph by Bosio.

ITALIAN PRODUCERS

by TERENCIO

In many European countries, the producer after a period of omnipotence and sometimes of exaggeration, seems at present to be suffering a vigurous counter-attack. It appears that he must now give way to the actor until such time as the latter's arrogance forces him to retire in his turn.

In certain foreign circles, the notion has been current that things have been otherwise in Italy and that the eclipse of producers in other countries has been accompanied by their constantly enhanced prestige with us. It was thought that the Italian producer's function was becoming a deliberately exclusive one.

In reality, on closer inspection things appear not at all so simple; this appreciation is only partly true, and a deeper study of the life and tendencies of the Italian theatre soon reveals some quite lively reactions against producers' influence.

It must not be forgotten that with us the producer is rather a recent discovery. Not so long ago, nine theatrical companies out of ten were directed by their leading actor, who certainly concerned himself with ensuring a necessary harmony in the interpretation of the text, but who was fairly, if not totally, indifferent to problems of scenic atmosphere, lighting, incidental music and so forth.

The birth of a really authentic art of production has been the result of a sustained battle waged, among others, essentially by Silvio d'Amico, founder and President of the Academy of Dramatic Art, whose syllabus all of a sudden gave producing an important place. Above all it has been due to repeated successes in the last few years of certain young producers of undoubted talent, and to the declared favour of the critics and the public.

Nevertheless the producer's life in Italy is not a happy one; and the obstinacy with which they seek to impress their personality more and more strongly, meets with a passive resistance which is predetermined, and not always so passive either...

In the space of this short article, we should like to try and make clear, at least in outline, the principle tendencies of contemporary production. In fact each of these tendencies is for the most part related to an individual. We will therefore content ourselves with establishing a sort of card index of the following men, who are certainly the most representative : Orazio Costa, Giorgio Strehler, Luchino Visconti, Ettore Giannini, Guido Salvini and Alessandro Brissoni.

ORAZIO COSTA, official producer of the Piccolo Teatro in Rome, is a pupil of Copeau and represents an austere tendency in the Italian theatre, which some even qualify as " philological ". His productions are faithful efforts of recreation and elucidation. He likes to make use of young graduates from the Academy of Dramatic Art. He is an idealist in the strict sense of the term, and is particularly drawn to psychological drama (Ibsen and Pirandello) though he manifests the eclecticism common to all Italian producers. Among his recent productions must be mentioned : *Six Characters in search of an Author*, (1948) *Joan of Lorraine* by Maxwell Anderson, *Mirra* by Vittorio Alfieri, Molière's *Don Juan*, Alfieri's *Orestes* and Goldoni's *Old Curiosity Shop* (all in 1949) and Anouilh's *Ring Round the Moon* (1950).

LUCHINO VISCONTI. A very well known and controversial figure. After the excitement caused in 1945 by his production of Jean Cocteau's *Les Parents Terribles*, he formed his own company for the season 1946-47 and 1948-49, of which the pivots were the pre-eminent Rina Morelli, Paolo Stoppa and Vittorio Gassman. During this period, he produced, among other plays *Crime and Punishment* (in Gaston Baty's adaptation), *Eurydice* (Anouilh), *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, *As You Like It*, and Vittorio Alfieri's *Orestes*. His productions are characterized by complexity of scenic construction, extremely meticulous rehearsal, and a somewhat mechanical preciseness of rhythm, in the lyrical as well as the more heavily accented passages. Two styles meet together in Visconti; one classical, the other realistic. One is aware of his special taste for the picturesque, a certain scenic inclination for tense situations and a singular capacity for concentrating and resolving crises.

A producer with a strong, angular and fiercely anti-traditional personality, who is alternately accused of decadence and lauded to the skies.

Certain aspects of his work are reminiscent of Max Reinhardt, others of Baty, Dullin and Jean Renoir, not to mention his affinities with the cinema.

GIORGIO STREHLER. Official producer of the Piccolo Teatro at Milan. He made his name in 1946 with an exemplary production of Gorki's *Little Townsfolk.* He is the youngest of the producers and considered to be the " discovery " of the post-war period. He has shown an extraordinary ability to " make a show " from every kind of text.

From Gorki he passed to Calderón, Pirandello, Tchekov, Salacrou, Goldoni and Shakespeare. Handicapped by the small dimensions of his stage, and by not always having the best actors at his disposal, he has resolved with airy fantasy the multiple requirements of modern drama. He succeeds in recreating the Russian atmosphere as well as the difficult rhythm of Goldoni. He provided a " real " sea and a " real " island for *The Tempest*, staged in the grand manner in the Boboli Gardens of Florence.

His most important productions have been : *The Giants of the Mountain*, Pirandello (1947), *The Raven*, Gozzi (at the Festival of Venice, 1948). *The Tempest* (Florence, 1948), *The Seagull*, Tchekov (1949) *The Skin of our Teeth*, Thornton Wilder (1949), *Richard III* and *Sophonisba* by Giorgio Trissino (1950).

ETTORE GIANNINI. A Neapolitan by birth, whose generous temperament is expressed in his stage creations. He exploits both comedy and drama with equal success. Gifted with irony, fantasy and great capacity for " putting things across ", his first preoccupation is to give characters a maximum of force and vitality, and for this reason he considers the actor first of all. In the second place, his concern is with pace and cohesion. He has worked with practically all the greatest actors of the Italian stage, and obtained a particular personal success in the creation of two feminine characters, the title part of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* played by Sarah Ferrati (1943) and Nina in Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* (1946) played by Andreina Pagnani. One cannot omit mentioning as well the show he has just produced based on Neapolitan songs and texts of a whole century, *Carosello Napoletano* (Neapolitan Tattoo, 1950) which is now on tour in England and America.

For the past three years or, more exactly, since his production of *Il Voto* by Salvatore de Giacomo, Giannini has rather withdrawn himself from the stage.

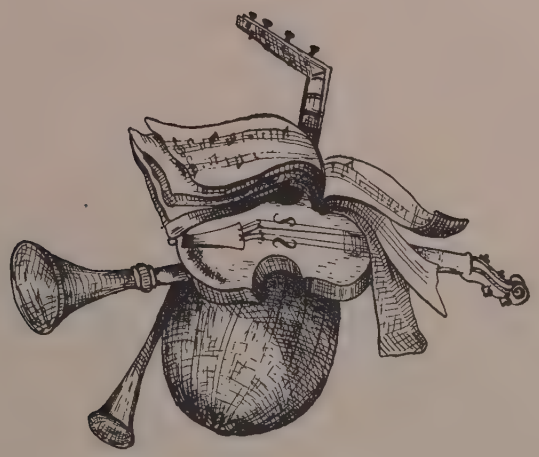
GUIDO SALVINI. Pupil of Max Reinhardt, from whom he has inherited a taste for productions in the open air. At Venice during the summer season, in the famous arena at Verona, in the Olympic Theatre at Vicenza, the Greek theatre at Syracuse and the Roman theatre at Ostia, he has staged immortal master-pieces with unmitigated success. His education differs from that of the younger generation of producers. It has given him a greater habit of self-criticism, and a very exact sense of tradition in the elaboration of classical drama — from the Greek theatre to Shakespeare — towards which he is specially attracted. His most recent productions are Sophocles' *Œdipus-Rex* (Vicenza Festival, Paris and London, 1948) *Julius Caesar* (Vicenza, 1949), *Gli Straccioni* (The Ragamuffins) by Annibal Caro (Vicenza, 1949), Seneca's *Medea* (1949), Aeschylus' *Persae* (Greek Theatre of Syracuse, 1950) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Verona, 1950).

ALESSANDRO BRISSONI is a methodical young producer, who in the last few years has shown qualities of solidity and perseverance. He goes on tour, sharing the life of the actors, and produces ten to fifteen plays a year. Apart from the great classical repertory he does not disdain comedies of a commercially successful type, for he considers that all types have their uses. He has to his credit some very curious productions : one for instance of Musset's *Caprices de Marianne* on a terrace in Capri overlooking the sea. He has also done A *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Naples, 1948); Tristan Bernard's *Le Petit Café* (1949); *The Man Who Came To Dinner* by Kaufman and Hart, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Verona, 1950) and Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes.*

It will be seen from the foregoing that it is innacurate to speak of an Italian school of producers. In fact we are in the presence of diverse personalities, united perhaps in their common eclecticism, but whose differences are none the less very marked. May these few notes, and the accompanying photographic documentation, assist the reader to a better knowledge of them.

TERENCIO

WORLD REVIEWS



THE THIRD CONGRESS
OF
THE INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE

I

ONE STAGE OF THE JOURNEY : THE PARIS RENDEZ-VOUS

BY ANDRÉ JOSSET

AFTER so prolonged a flight around the world (1), the cool peace of the great chestnut trees in the Avenue Gabriel was welcoming and restful. Before me, amid other groups of chestnuts, in a garden filled with birds and statuary, rose the white mass of the Maison de la Pensée Française, in which our third Congress was to take place. Behind me, the rumble of traffic up and down the avenue des Champs-Elysées : already the month of June was decking the town with its pale blue skies, and the beauty of its transparent, flickering shadows. This stage of our journey promised well; we could already count on thirty-three nations to participate in the work of the Congress.

In the very heart of Paris, a hundred delegates and observers from many parts of the world were about to meet to discuss the theatre : its difficulties, its plans and its objectives, the assistance which our art should bring to the work of peace and mutual understanding, and to the great crusade for popular education undertaken by Unesco.

For the first time envoys from the Far-East were joining us. Indonesia was present. India, who had been represented in Zürich by an observer, was now sending an official delegate to Paris. From regions geographically less remote, Iran and Lebanon, whose National Centres are

(1) See "World Theatre", N° 0 (Travel Diary).

not yet formed, were coming to bear witness to the interest and curiosity aroused in their countries by the I.T.I. The heralded observer from Haiti had been detained by contrary winds, but Peru, who reached us from his Embassy in Paris, had a more auspicious journey.

For many months an anxious Committee had pored over the problems of organizing the Exhibition of Modern Theatre Architecture. On the appointed date however, our ears were filled with the gratifying noise of hammers, and our eyes with the sight of tall ladders reared in the Exhibition. Halls like masts of ships in port, unloading their cargo of assembled models. Several of these admirable miniature theatres were worked by electricity : by pushing a button, one could watch a whole auditorium swing from one to another of the stages set round its periphery : one could illuminate given areas or black them out, one could plunge one's gaze into the fantastic depth of these shadowy little theatres, which are still in limbo, but which tomorrow we trust will become living theatres, for the greater advancement of an art which must renew itself to remain alive. Beneath this collection of marvellous toys, assembled alas for a few days only, one could feel a flow of imagination, of curiosity in research, of faith in the future which did not seek to impose themselves by dogmatic affirmation, but were expressed in a silent lesson that was almost unintentional.

The Congress proceeded, through the work of its Committees, according to plan. Dr Torres-Bodet's message made a deep impression, and will materially influence our work of tomorrow. Already our first aim, which was to create a common frame of mind, and as great a solidarity as possible between our National Centres, has been attained; unquestionable achievements in various directions are in progress and course of execution. It may be that before long new horizons will be opening before this vast international association of theatre people known as the I.T.I. in which such a considerable number of men of good will are gathered together.

The Paris meeting has left us with many charming memories. We trust that the French National Centre who, with the generous assistance of official authorities, were our hosts, will accept our deep gratitude for the untiring efforts they made in a good cause and for our delectation.

And now our travels are about to begin again; the programmes agreed upon are being methodically carried out, and already the teams are getting busy over the coming meeting in Oslo.

ANDRÉ JOSSET

II

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

DOCTOR JAIME TORRES-BODET

At the opening session of the Third Congress of the I. T. I., M. Jaime Torres-Bodet admirably defined the tasks before us, and especially the part which we are called upon to play in the education of the masses.

WE are told that, far from being the monopoly of specialists, the theatre belongs by hereditary right to the people. If that be so, there are many illusions to be shed and we must no longer hide from ourselves the fact that an art that claims to be at once universal and popular is today often the preserve of certain limited groups. You, better than anyone, know the reasons for this, and what qualifies a man for fellowship with these elect : be it according to place and custom, or birth into a privileged class, or a particular generation; or again it may be a question of holding to the right school of thought; or merely having the advantage of living in a metropolis.

But I fear, Gentlemen, that when we defend the theatre's mission we are readier to take as our examples the tragedies of Greece, the Nô of Japan or mediaeval mystery plays, than the modern theatre and its practical role in society. All our references are to the past; yet in our age there is no lack of talent, knowledge or devotion among the people of the theatre. The occasions, unfortunately, are all too rare when they can really accomplish their mission and can communicate to those around them — it should be to all mankind — the teaching or the charms of the art to which they dedicate their lives.

This faces us with a question we cannot shirk. Can we in 1950 be content with a theatre which reaches only a minute fraction of the world's population? Can we confine our efforts in the theatre's defence and for its greater glory merely to the stages, state or private, of the great cities of Europe, America and Asia? It is said that the theatre is the most effective of cultural media, the living body of education, and one of the surest instruments of international understanding; it is even asserted that there is no society worthy of the name without a theatre. What then of the vast masses of country dwellers or the urban proletariat; what of the innumerable suburban areas and villages so long avoided by even the most adventurous touring companies? And what, too, of those vast areas where the theatre died before it had even grown beyond its ritual form? Those are daunting problems from which I know your Institute will not shrink.

Indeed there is an urgent need to unite theatre folk, to abolish the artificial frontiers that divide them, to multiply their meetings and reinforce the cooperation between them. It is a matter of urgency to promote and sustain research, to encourage experiment and to ensure that each discovery is widely shared. There is a further need to help secure international performance of the best plays, particularly those which can do something towards bringing men's minds together and inculcating a broad humanism. Then, too, the techniques and arts which contribute to the greatness of the theatre as we know it must be continually improved.

Absorbing though they be, however, these tasks cannot absolve us from embarking on another : we still have to create the theatre of which we dream, from which no one will be excluded, no class, no social stratum, no area of the world, and — if it needs saying — no race. Above all, this new theatre will not exclude the young. It is youth which deserves the best of our endeavour and it is by youth throughout the world that the theatre must live. When Sophocles, Shakespeare, Molière and Goethe become part of the inheritance, no longer of students only, but of young factory workers and peasants; when these boys and girls can share the uplifting adventures of the play, and when the theatre unites them all — as it can do — in mutual goodwill, on that day we shall have accomplished our task for education and for peace.

III

THE CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION OF THEATRE ARCHITECTURE

BY PIERRE SONREL

The theatrical personalities who met at the Zürich Congress of the I. T. I expressed a desire that an exhibition of modern theatre architecture should be organized to enable them to study all most recent innovations. The Executive Committee of the I. T. I. met this request by organizing such an exhibition in the Maison de la Pensée Française, in conjunction with the Third Congress of the I. T. I.

Although not absolutely complete, it grouped together some extraordinarily diverse plans, the greater part of which were already in course of execution. Its interest was evident, and it has travelled since to several other countries. It was linked with a conference at which the most qualified experts gave their views : Messrs Norman Marshall (Great Britain), Walter Unruh (Germany) and A. Lauterer (United States) on machinery ; M. L. H. de Koninck (Belgium) on new materials ; Messrs. André Barsacq (France), O. Niedermoser (Austria) and Hans Jacob Nielsen (Norway) on the auditorium, and so on.

The king-pins of this exhibition were without doubt Mr. Kenneth Rae and M. Pierre Sonrel. M. Sonrel's qualifications are universally recognized and, in the following article, he has been good enough to give us his impressions and conclusions.

"THE mission of the theatre architect of past centuries seems almost easy compared with the problems which face the builders of to-day. It is not merely a matter of studying the lessons of the past, and seeking their perfect expression. From one decade to another our century revolutionizes not only material requirements but the very psychology of the spectator, and we must be bold enough to plan for a future which we know to be in process of evolution. We must therefore salute with warmth and gratitude those Masters who, having already acheived monuments that will bear future witness to the taste and science of our time, nevertheless pursue their efforts, hand in hand with artists and technicians, in quest of a perfection which is necessarily elusive in the art of theatre architecture."

These words were spoken by Pierre Aimé Touchard, Director Général of the Comédie-Française at the Conference and Exhibition of Theatre Architecture.

The form of a poem and the form of a building will influence one another, turn and turn about, as cause and effect. A poem will require a special place for its expression; a place will give a poem a special sense. Architects and theatrical producers, though mutually responsible for the expression of one idea, do not always speak the same language.

It therefore seemed opportune, at a moment when theatrical equipment the world over was being put in order, to lay proposals and achievements before all those on whom the future of the theatre depends, in order to penetrate beyond general and nebulous theories, to a more effective exchange of ideas.

Because, for too many such people, as well as for too many critics and spectators on the other side of the foothlights, a theatre is a building which exists, or if it does not which must be built, but

which in itself presents no problem related to the drama. All that is required is that the audience should see and hear well, be comfortably seated and sheltered from the elements, without having to pay too much. Whereupon producers and designers take possession of the premises — from which in Montaigne's phrase : " habit removes the strangeness " — and give themselves over to exhibiting their own temperaments and personal endeavours. The works of symbolists, naturalists, constructivists, expressionnists, succeed each other upon the stage, without the architect of the theatre appearing to be in any way concerned.

Yet by the very fact that it exists, and has posts and beams and balconies and dimensions, the theatre is present in the show, and willy-nilly imposes its restrictions, its style, its limitations, its acoustics. In short, it *acts a part* in any play which comes to life within its walls. Appia observed this long ago : " The musical span, " he wrote, " which envelopes, commands, and regulates the dramatic action, engenders at the time the space in which it is developed. "

A century ago, such preoccupations had been set aside, and the same standards prevailed everywhere. As Pierre Aimé Touchard emphasizes, the perturbations of our civilization entail new forms of architecture.

The exhibition made this evident. It displayed a confrontation of the most diverse, if not the most opposite, forms, an effervescence, and a proliferation of the most dissimilar proposals for satisfying the selfsame needs.

A general view of it revealed two main trends. The technicians of countries which have a long theatrical tradition remained faithful to certain given factors. The new countries, without traditions, were determined to ignore these factors and took, as starting point for their adventures in search of dramatic form, a plastic rhythm, or a social concept, or some technical novelty, rather than any human innovation (i.e. innovation pertaining to the actors or the audience.)

In these latter experiments, the influence of the cinema is discernible. Their authors, haunted by the possibilities of this new medium, are ready to accept its technique, and one sees plans for staging, for lighting, for audience-grouping, which, divorced from convention, resemble a film studio. The old lighting apparatus of battens, footlights, fixed projectors and spot-lights, is replaced by a stock of moveable projectors, set in one place for one scene and in another for the next.

In the same way mobile stages, with self-contained sets and lighting even, replace the sacred precincts of the theatre. Using neither flies nor trap-exits these autonomous stages are, in short, film sets, exposed for a space to the public view. For another example, take the use of acoustic correctors and microphones, those sad negations of the normal form of means of intercourse.

On the other hand there appears, especially in Western Europe, to be a logical evolution of traditional architecture, an evolution which takes into account the materials and technique of our time, yet respects the human basis of the theatre. Here it is not so much new technical discoveries as new ideas, the evolution of thought, the tendencies and aspirations of the poets and producers, which inspire architects attuned to these new rhythms.

To this movement belong the French school of architects, dominated by the work of Auguste Perret, and the Italians who maintain their brilliant tradition as builders, and the Germans with their powerful technique. England seems already set on a course of greater boldness. In Sweden there is yet more freedom, and the theatre of Malmo constitutes an important landmark in the casting off of classical convention.

In Yugo-Slavia, in North and South America realizations of free experiments are also to be found. But are we to consider that these experiments ring the knell of the classical European stage? Apart from the gusts of fresh air afforded by certain arrangements of detail, are they articulated into an architechtonic whole? This seems much less certain than it did twenty-five years ago. The forecast revolution is taking the form of a slower evolution, which assimilates and sets in its place each new requirement and contribution of our time.

As an example of this, the experiments of lighting experts should excite new demands from poets and producers, and not be introduced before they are called for.

The demonstrations made in the course of the Conference are none the less bound to repercuss. An Englich electronic organ, American projector lamps, selective electronic apparatus from France, ingenious and well studied equipment from Germany offer rich contributions to architects of the theatre.

The last word has not been said in the matter of theatre lighting, but there is no doubt that evolution in the near future will largely be governed by application of the newly discovered techniques in the field. Reporters on the Conference, whether they were studying this matter or another, never failed to allude to it. If diverse opinions were manifest on other points, agreement seemed unanimous on this one.

It is to be hoped that further displays of the same kind will follow to complete the preliminary survey, not with the aim of producing a single type of theatre which holds good everywhere and for every purpose, but to enable technicians to complete and pool their information. Thus the synthesis desired by Auguste Perret may be achieved :

« Architecture orders space,
Music orders time;
Is not the stage which orders both
The greatest art of all? »

PIERRE SONREL.

★ ★

ARGENTINE

To encourage national dramatic authors, the Government has decided that each company must open its season with an Argentine play. Besides which, foreign works are subject to 50 % tax, a decision which has been diversely commented upon.

There is no professional theatre except in Buenos-Ayres. The rest of our vast country is left to amateurs. The Ministry of Education has just instituted a competition for Amateur Companies, for which a hundred and thirty-two competitors inscribed themselves. The Frist Prize went to the " Theatre Libre Evaristo Carriego " of Buenos-Ayres, and to the " Cultural Group, La Renaissance " of Jujuy; these two companies have received 3.000 pesos and the assurance of being allowed to give ten performances in the capital. Also rewarded were the best character actor, the best " ingénue ", the best producer and so on.

WORKS OF ARGENTINE AUTHORS. — Enrique Suarez de Deza, Argentine by birth, lives and works principally in Spain. Four of his plays were given this year for the first time : *Una Pagina en Blanco* (A Blank Page), which is inspired by a Neapolitan legend, *La Furias*, with an all-feminine cast, *Catalina, no me llores* (Catalina, do not weep for me) frankly farcical, and *Casa de Reyes* (The Royal House), which is already known in Madrid.

The National Theatre presented *El Fabricante de Piolin* (The String Manufacturer), a farce by Carlos Gorostiza.

Among the works of young writers, the following must be mentioned : *La Isla de Gente Hermosa* (The Isle of Human Beauty) by Roman Gomez Masia, a work of poetic escapism, *Cervantes en el Neuquen* (Cervantes at Neuquen) by Maria Luz Regasmas and Juan Albornoz, which strikes the patriotic cord of Spanish-American brotherhood, and *En la Tierra del Santero y del Virrey* (The Vice-Roi and the Keeper of the Sanctuary) by Carlos Chizzini, a delightful picture of colonial life at the time of the English invasions.

FOREIGN COMPAGNIES IN ARGENTINA. — We received a visit from the Madeleine Renaud-Jean-Louis Barrault Company, with a very extensive repertoire, and Ballets from the Opera in Paris, under the direction of Serge Lifar. Admirable performances, which require no comment.

Mercedes Prendes' Spanish Company created in Argentina *Ni Margarita ni el Diablo* by Carlos Llopis, *La Risa* (Laughter) by Quintero and *La Ermita, La Fuente y el Rio* (The Hermit, the Spring and the River) by Eduardo Marquina.

Another Spanish Company, that of Maria Guerrero and Pepe Romeu, gave *Locura de Amor* (Love's Folly) by Tamayo and Baus and *Lodo y Armino* (The Ermine and the Mud) by the Chilian writer Alvaro Ruga Fischer.

PLAYS IN TRANSLATION. — Argentine companies have put on a great many foreign plays : *La Tendre Ennemie* The Gentle Enemy by André Paul Antoine, Aldous Huxley's *The Gioconda Smile*, Paul Vandenberghe's *Gringalet*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Giraudoux's *La Folle de Chaillot* and *Amphitryon* 38, J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, and *Detective Story* by Sidney Kingsley. André Roussin's *Bobosse* is also announced.

ARGENTINA
ARGENTINE

THE GIOCONDA SMILE, *by Aldous Huxley. Grand Splendid Theatre. Buenos-Ayres. 1950.* Photograph by Perl.

LE SOURIRE DE LA JOCONDE, *d'Aldous Huxley. Théâtre "Grand Splendid". Buenos-Ayres. 1950.* Photo Perl.

JOROPO VENEZOLANO, *ballet by Joaquin Perez Fernandez. Buenos-Ayres. 1950.*

JOROPO VENEZOLANO, *ballet de Joaquin Perez Fernandez. Buenos-Ayres. 1950.*

NETHERLANDS. — Many of this season's records are still running, a certain proof of their success, particularly in the case of the three plays by Augustin Cecima, the well-known author of *The Jesuit's Lady*, although a Spanish lawsuit has put to the imperative. The three plays mentioned are *La Sonne* (which *The Scandal Street*), *Les Ses* (which *The Scandal Street*), and *La Grande Maison* (a pal *Tonio de la* the *Tonio* which *Tonio* [illegible] *Tonio* [illegible] the two years.

SCANDINAVIA. — In 1948, the Scandinavian theatre gave a hundred and thirty-nine original productions. The total receipts amounted to [illegible] francs. This figure was given by "organizations" the national associations of authors, who have just celebrated their twenty anniversary. This gives a concrete idea of the importance and the vitality of the Scandinavian theatre.

ARTHUR S. TOMKINS.

BELGIUM

FLEMISH SPEAKING THEATRE

At the Koninklijke Vlaamsche Schouwburg, two French comedies, *Ville De Sinaïne* and *Dagen Wanen*, were presented themselves as entertaining dramatic authors, the first creating a sensation in Belgium and Nieuw Lorem, and the second a national theme in Dutch Dutch. In the Flemish Theatre in Brussels, Paul de Vlaam has shown a new comedy — *Doorstand* [illegible].

The Impromptu in Antwerp has had a busy season with Bernstein's *Pattes de la Loup* and James Barrie's *Peter Pan*. The scenic complexity were solved to are in particular as Bernstein and Bernstein, as the management of the open-air theatre.

The B.M.S. Company visited South Africa and the Congo and played there with great success. Lorenzo to J. Tomorrow, the well-known French author and Aurelia's *Antigone*. Finally the Brussel "ville-theatre" went to play in the Netherlands.

Among open-air productions a gracious *Lear of Flanders* in Antwerp must be mentioned, based on the famous novel of Henri Conscience, and a remarkable *Fête of Joy and Pain* in Ghent which received the eulogies of Georges Duhamel in one of the big Paris newspapers.

JEAN GRONDELLE.

FRENCH SPEAKING THEATRE

We saw in the National Theatre a particularly remarkable ending to the season. The production of Marivaux's *La Colonie* (in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Contrat Social*) was unanimously applauded. It was followed by Gorodisse's *Entre* and a scintillating adaptation, by Jean Delaire, of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

The Théâtre du Parc welcomed the Comedie-Française at more and more regular intervals, either in complete productions, or in individual great actors. Bernard was also produced there, with Bernard Pierre Dufour, a new talent in Paris.

[illegible] Bérenare, who devoted a season for an theatre, the "Théâtre de Bruxelles", from which all commercialism of playing for money were excluded. He succeeded in giving and young authors a chance, notably in producing Jean Sigaud's *Le Dernier Geste*.

In the historic castle of Beersel, outside the gates of Brussels, the organizers of open-air performances announced young Louis Bouny with revoicing a legend, *The Prisoner of Berne*, in which all the influences undergone by the author were manifest.

A new comedy, point of the "Comédie-Française", has just set up the first floating theatre in Belgium. Having ventured a barge into a snow-boat, they sailed the country with a repertory which includes Thornton Wilder's *Bonne Journée*, Jean Varnier's *Le Bête à Sagesse* and *Le Boulingrin* by Courteline.

JEAN FRANCHIS.

CANADA

At the Opera-Bouffe Parisienne in Montreal this summer, Lucienne-Boldy produced Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* in modern dress. It was given a cold reception.

"Les Compagnons de Saint-Laurent", a professional company of French-speaking actors, have included in the programme of their fortnightly season in Montreal: *The Just Before the Battle*, *La Corde du Pendu* by Gaston Miron, *Wilder's Our Town*, *Amédée* by Ionesco, *Le Bal des Voleurs* and *Le Bal Gris*. The King Dies by Ionesco.

The "Théâtre Populaire" has opened their new season with *La Passion Monte*, *The Dust Gather* by Wilson and Lawson, and *The Old Maid and the Thief* by Gian-Carlo Menotti.

"Le Théâtre Vert" announces Giraudoux's *Ondine* and Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Bernard Wesling in Lorca.

The Cap, an original French-Canadian work, has broken all records for a long run. Gratien Gélinas announces its production on Broadway in the new English translation.

The "Théâtre Populaire", the only permanent theatre in French Canada, intends in the programme of their fortnightly season Bonnaire, *Le Bête* by Vauthier, *Les Mousquetaires du Couvent* and *Le Tricorne* by Martinez Sierra as guests this season. Bingoven and Gerard Bonnard of France.

GUY BELLEMARE.

CHILE

[illegible]

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

[illegible]

THE SEAGULL, *by Anton Tchekov. Produced by Eino Kalima. Setting by Karl Fager. National Theatre, 1950.* Photograph by Valokuva.

LA MOUETTE, *d'Anton Tchekov. Mise en scène d'Eino Kalima. Décor de Karl Fager. Théâtre National, 1950.* Photo Valokuva.

LE BAL DES VOLEURS, *by Jean Anouilh. Produced by Eino Salmelainen. Setting by Lasse Elo. Workers Theatre, Tampere. 1949.* Photograph by Staf.

LE BAL DES VOLEURS, *de Jean Anouilh. Mise en scène d'Eino Salmelainen. Décor de Lasse Elo. Théâtre des Ouvriers, Tampere. 1949.* Photo Staf.

BOULE DE SUIF, *by Maupassant. Adapted by Fritz Hochwälder. Produced by Eino Salmelainen. Setting by Lasse Elo. Workers Theatre, Tampere. 1950.* Photograph by Staf.

BOULE DE SUIF, *de Maupassant. Adaptation de Fritz Hochwälder. Mise en scène d'Eino Salmelainen. Décor de Lasse Elo. Théâtre des Ouvriers, Tampere. 1950.* Photo Staf.

MEXICO ☆ MEXIQUE

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

LE FESTIVAL DU THÉATRE INTERNATIONAL

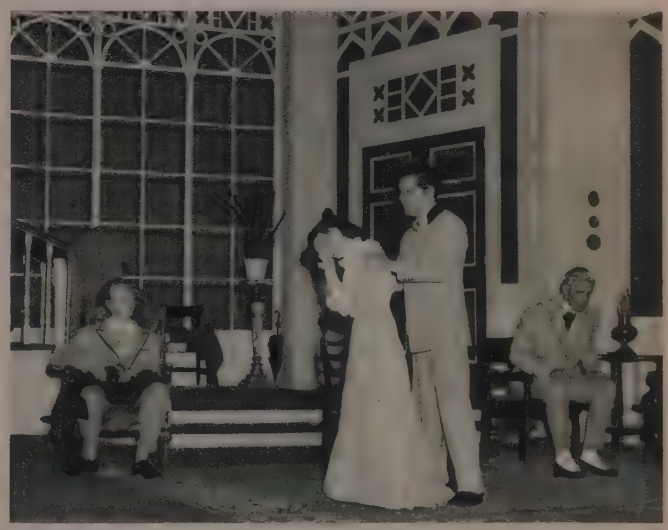
FRANCE

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, *by Edmond Rostand. Produced by André Moreau. Arts Theatre, 1950*

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, *d'Edmond Rostand. Mise en scène d'André Moreau. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*

MONTSERRAT, *by Emmanuel Roblès. Produced by Celestino Gorostiza. Arts Theatre, 1950.*

MONTSERRAT, *d'Emmanuel Roblès. Mise en scène de Celestino Gorostiza. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*



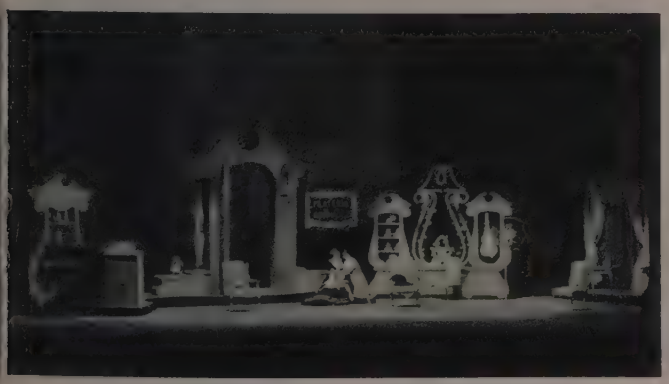
U.S.A. ★ ETATS-UNIS

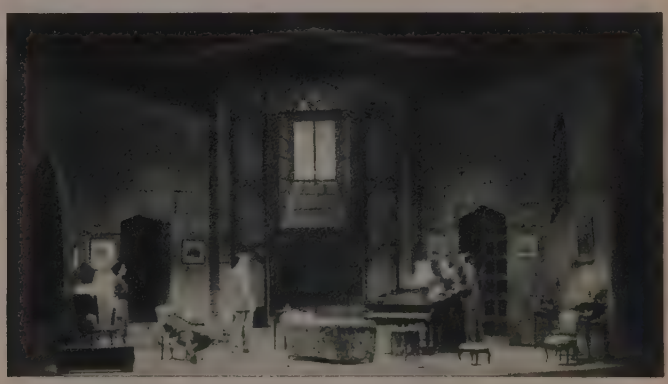
EMPEROR JONES, *by Eugene O'Neill. Produced by Enrique Ruelas. Arts Theatre, 1950.*

EMPEROR JONES, *d'Eugène O'Neill. Mise en scène d'Enrique Ruelas. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*

THE LITTLE FOXES, *by Lillian Hellman. Produced by Earl Sennett. Arts Theatre, 1950.*

THE LITTLE FOXES, *de Lillian Hellman. Mise en scène d'Earl Sennett. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*





ARGENTINA ★ ARGENTINE

UNA VIUDA DIFICIL, *by C. Nale Roxlo. Produced by Jose de J. Acevos. Arts Theatre, 1950.*

UNA VIUDA DÍFICIL *(Une veuve difficile), de C. Nale Roxlo. Mise en scène de Jose de J. Acevos. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*

UNITED KINGDOM ★ ROYAUME UNI

TRESPASS, *by Emlyn Williams. Produced by Frank Whitbourn. Arts Theatre, 1950.*

TRESPASS, *d'Emlyn Williams. Mise en scène de Frank Whitbourn. Théâtre des Beaux-Arts, 1950.*

In his presentation of E.F. Samberk's *Eleventh Decologue*, the producer, Alfred Radok used the film which he himself had made concerning the calvary of the Czech Jews during the occupation. Certain sequences of the film were projected on the back-cloth in the course of performance, with the object of localizing the action in time.

Since the beginning of September seven separate juries have been touring the different theatres of the Republic to revue their work, and to pick the prize-winners of the festival for professionals which is entitled " Theatrical Harvest 1950 ". In the course of December, the winning companies will perform in Prague.

J. T. G.

DENMARK

Denmark's foremost dramatic critic, Dr. Frederik Schyberg, died prematurely this summer at the age of forty-four. He was on the staff of the big Copenhagen newspaper the " Politiken " and was generally considered the leading critic of Scandinavia. His death is a great loss to the Danish theatre.

The best performances of the 1949-50 season in Copenhagen were those of modern American drama : *A Streetcar Named Desire*, produced by John Price at the Royal Theatre, *Death of a Salesman*, produced by Holger Gabrielsen at the same theatre, with Johannes Meyer in the leading part, and *Summer and Smoke*, by Tennessee Williams, produced extremely charmingly at the little theatre of Riddersalen, by the well-known film director Bjarne Henning-Jensen, with settings by Helga Refn. Lily Weiding caused quite a sensation in the part of Alma, in the last-named play, which is still running at a larger theatre, the Frederiksberg. Among other American productions we must mention *Annie Get Your Gun*, very competently staged by Kai Wilton at the Nörrebros Theatre.

The famous couple Else Schouboe and Henrik Bentzon played at the Frederiksberg Theatre, first Terence Rattigan's *Harlequinade* and *The Browning Version*, and later *Olivia*, adapted for the stage by the same author.

There were few new Danish plays. Sam Besekow produced Sys Gauguin's *Her Unknown Husband* at the Alléscenen, with Berthe Quistgaard as leading lady. At the Folketeatret, a young group of actors showed the play *Nielsen* by a new dramatist, Erik Balling, who earned quite a success.

The prima-ballerina of the Royal Theatre, Margot Lander, left the stage in January 1950 to the regret of all ballet lovers. Her farewell performances were high points of the season. Three months later, the Danish-born dancer, Nina Stroganova and her husband Vladimir Dokoudovsky were the guests of the Royal Ballet, dancing in two of Margot Lander's favourite ballets, *Giselle* and *The Swan Lake*. Even though Mme Stroganova could not efface the memory of Mme Lander, she was very favourably received.

Among the new ballets of the Royal Theatre, two by Nini Theilade deserve mention; *Methafor*, to the music of Niels Viggo Bentzon, and *Concerto* to Robert Schumann's opus 54. Another Danish choreographer, Birger Bartholin, achieved success with his *Symphonie Classique*. During an after-season of a fortnight, the Royal Danish Ballet attracted much attention in the foreign newspapers, when several critics discovered for the first time the outstanding qualities and rich traditions of this company.

For the production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which is performed each year by a foreign company at the castle of Elsinore, Michael Redgrave gave his moving and simple dramatic rendering, supported by actors of the Old Vic.

EBBE NEERGAARD.

FINLAND

In the last few years Anouilh has been the most favoured author in Finland. In the course of last season four of his plays were performed, *Ardèle*, *Roméo et Jeannette*, *Le Rendez-Vous de Senlis* and *Le Bal des Voleurs*. French authors, moreover, have dominated the repertoire : Sartre with *Huis Clos* (No Exit), Aymé with *Lucienne et le Boucher*, Raynal with *A souffert sous Ponce Pilate*, as well as Sauvajon and Roger Ferdinand.

At the National Theatre the successes were : *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* and Tchekov's *Seagull*, of which the production by M. Eino Kalima was much appreciated. As to Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (Swedish Theatre, Helsinki), it was coldly received by the public, in spite of the critics' praises. At the same theatre, Henry James' *The Heiress* had a fine success.

In the classical repertory, special mention must made of Racine's *Britannicus* (Swedish Theatre, Helsinki) Goethe's *Faust* (Municipal Theatre, Turku) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in a most interesting production by Eino Salmelainen (Workers' Theatre, Tampere).

The celebrated English producer, Tyrone Guthrie, produced Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* at the Swedish Theatre. The play was afterwards transfered to the Royal Dramatic Theatre at Stockholm, who in exchange acted two Strindberg plays at Helsinki, for the " Internordic Theatre Congress ".

The most favourably received of the Finnish plays was *Fabian opens the Door* by Walentin Chorell, who writes in Swedish; this play was also given in Denmark and Sweden. Among the authors who write in Finnish, Ilmari Turja is perhaps the best, but in general it must be confessed that the national productions of last season lacked interest.

The Director of the National Theatre, M. Eino Kalima has just resigned his post, after holding it for thirty years. His successor, M. Arvi Kivimaa, is much esteemed both as a man of letters and as a man of the theatre.

SOLE UEXKULL.

FRANCE

The end of 1949-50 (1) season was dominated by the production of *Clérambard* by Marcel Aymé, at the Comédie des Champs-Elysées. Many great names of dramatists have been evoked in connection with it, and their diversity, coupled with the mixed reactions of the public, show that we are confronted with an uncommon dramatic cocktail in a vein of comedy which is at once pungent and bitter.

Audiberti, served by the young companies of André Reybaz and Georges Vitaly, in the little theatres of the Huchette and the Noctambules, continues, with *L'Ampelour*, *Sa Peau* and *La Pucelle*, to assert on the stage his original and poetic personality. Since most of his plays were written long before they were acted, and they have not moreover been produced in any chronological order, it is still difficult to trace the evolution of this author, who beguils and disconcerts us by turns with the profusion of his thought and its obscurities, with the richness of his language and its excesses.

Sacha Pitoeff discovered among his father's papers a youthful exercise by Jean Cocteau, based on a Japanese Nô play, *The Unjustly Suspected Wife*. It is an example of a type of theatre dear to Cocteau's heart. The play is constructed and the text devised to justify a production which entirely monopolizes attention. Sacha Pitoeff carried out the poet's intentions with signal success.

Le Bal du Lieutenant Helt by Gabriel Arout at the Mathurins Theatre, and *Jeanne et ses Juges* by Thierry Maulnier at the Vieux Colombier gave the impression of two solid dramas, remarkable for the quality and the vigour of their style.

In *Le Premier Jour*, produced at the Studio des Champs Elysées under the aegis of the "Assistance for First Plays" of the Ministry of Arts and Letters, André Lem treated the throes and storms of first love with discretion, but not without a certain literary conventionality.

Comedy productions included *La Mariée est trop belle* (The Bride is too beautiful) by Michel Duran, at the St. Georges, which had a mixed reception, and *Bobosse*, a new success by André Roussin at the Michodière, a diversion of rare virtuosity, but which failed to satisfy those who await a full scale comedy of manners from the author of *Les Œufs de l'Autruche*. *Aux Quatre Coins* at the Gramont, is a modern comedy in the manner of Marivaux, conducted with airy wit which seems to have brought its author, Jean Marsan, instantaneous renown.

The recapitulation of plays written between the wars continues with revivals of *Malborough s'en va-t-en guerre* by Marcel Achard produced by the Jean-Louis Barrault company in an adorable picture setting of Jean-Denis Malclès, with Bernstein's *Voyage* at the Ambassadeurs, with Pierre Blanchard playing Bourdet's *La Prisonnière* at the Athénée, and Michel Simon playing the same author's *Fric-Frac* at the Théâtre Antoine, with Michel Vitold in Anouilh's *Voyageur sans Bagages* at Montparnasse, and finally Claudel's *L'Otage* at the Comédie-Française.

Foreign drama has been represented by an adaptation of Cronin's *Jupiter Laughs* (Les Hommes proposent) at the Renaissance, and Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (Le Héros et le Soldat) at the Studio des Champs Elysées, by a Pirandello programme at the Noctambules and Gerald Savory's *George and Margaret* at the Théâtre Daunou.

The new venture at the American Theatre Club, of giving programmes in English, continues with *No Exit*, an adaptation of *Huis Clos* by Jean-Paul Sartre, a dramatic version of Norman Corwin's *Curley*, and *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder.

Ruth Draper gave a new series of recitals at the Œuvre, and the Ohel Theatre of Tel-Aviv, directed by Moshe Halévy gave, in Yiddish before the Paris public, a panorama of entertainments ranging from Biblical drama to contemporary musical comedy, and including an adaptation of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. The great Italian actor Ruggero Ruggeri played Pirandello, Andreyev and Plato at the Théâtre Michel, and Orson Wells at the Théâtre Edward VII gave a first rendering of two plays written, produced and acted by himself, *The Unthinking Lobster* and *Time Runs*.

During the season, the Comédie-Française not only gave daily performances at both the Salle Richelieu and the Salle Luxembourg, but also made several tours in Belgium and took part in several B.B.C. broadcasts from London, including a televised version of *Othello*. They also made an extensive tour in Egypt.

In Belgium, Holland, Spain and Portugal, Jouvet's company played Jules Romain's *Dr Knock* and Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes*. The Hebertot company visited about twenty Italian Towns with *L'Annonce Faite à Marie* by Claudel, and *Le Maître de Santiago* by Montherlant. The Madeleine Renaud Jean-

(1) It should be noted that the French Centre of the I. T. I. will once again only give reviews of straight theatrical productions in this number, reserving opera and ballet notices for a future occasion.

NORWAY
NORVÈGE

THE PRETENDERS, *by Ibsen. Produced by Agnès Mowinkel. Norske Teater, Oslo. 1950.*

LES PRÉTENDANTS AU TRONE, *d'Ibsen. Mise en scène d'Agnès Mowinckel. Norske Teater, Oslo. 1950.*

NETHERLANDS
PAYS-BAS

ELKERLIJCK, *by Petrus de Diest (1475). Produced by Johan de Meester. "Comedia" Company. Open-air performance. Delft, 1950.*

ELKERLIJCK, *de Petrus de Diest (1475). Mise en scène de Johan de Meester. Compagnie "Comedia". Représentation en plein air. Delft, 1950.*

UNITED KINGDOM
ROYAUME UNI

MEASURE FOR MEASURE, *by Shakespeare. Production and Sets by Peter Brook. Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. 1950.* Photograph by Angus Mc Bean.

MESURE POUR MESURE, *de Shakespeare. Mise en scène et décor de Peter Brook. Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-sur-Avon. 1950.* Photo Angus Mc Bean.

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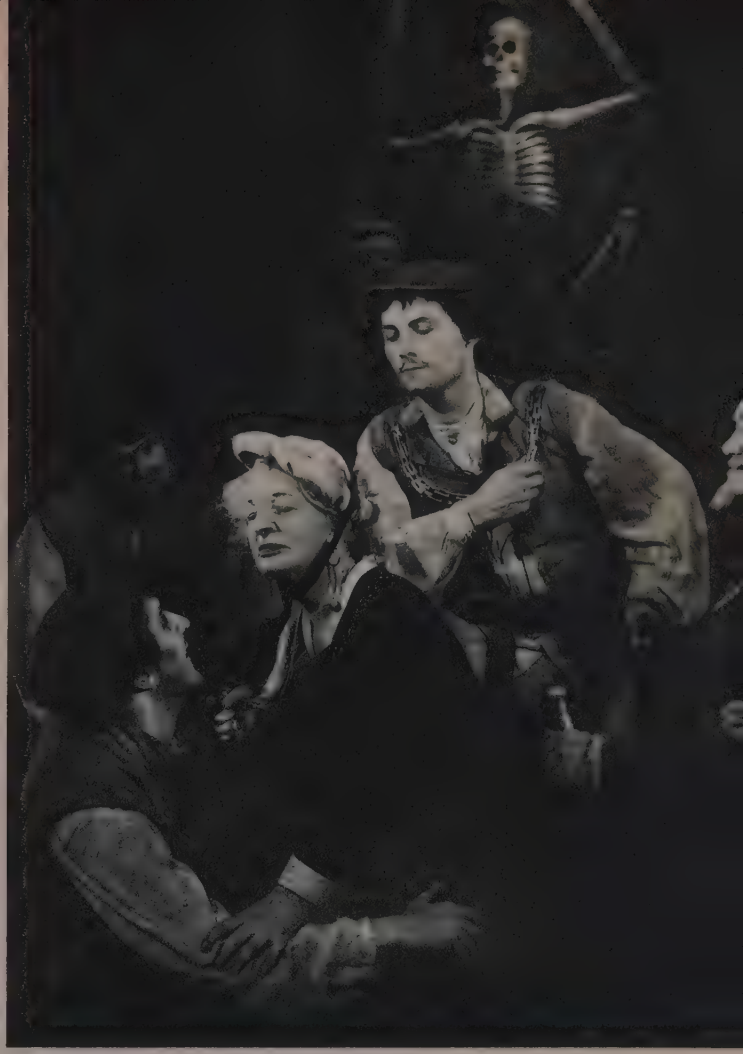
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, *by Shakespeare. Produced by John Gielgud. Sets by Mariano Andreu. Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. 1950.* Photograph by Angus Mc Bean.

BEAUCOUP DE BRUIT POUR RIEN, *de Shakespeare. Mise en scène de John Gielgud. Décor de Mariano Andreu. Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-sur-Avon. 1950.* Photo Angus Mc Bean.



Louis Barrault Company produced its repertory, both classical and modern, in the capitals of South America.

The month of July was marked by the Festivals of dramatic art in the South of France. At Avignon, Jean Vilar revived his unusual rendering of *Le Cid*, on the platform erected in the court of honour of the Palace of the Popes, and produced, for the first time in France, Shakespeare's *Henri IV*, adapted by Maurice Clavel and Jean Curtis. He also played Thierry Maulnier's *Le Profanateur* (The Profaner). At Nîmes, a young producer, Raymond Hermantier used the prodigious Roman arena for an unconventional production of *Julius Caesar*, adapted by Jean-Francis Reille. This revival of dramatic festivals seems to indicate a desire on the part of producers of the younger generation to break away from the often narrow limits of the regular stages in Paris and the provinces, and to seek a popular audience in an atmosphere of grandeur and festivity.

PAUL-LOUIS MIGNON.

GERMANY

Foreign authors, English, American and French predominate in the repertory of almost every German theatre. Last year, at the Hebbel Theatre in Berlin, no German author figured on the programme. The young German writers are handicapped by their inexperience in the sphere of dramatic technics and by their lack of proper perspective of recent events.

The Festival of the Ruhr at Recklinghausen illustrated the effort that was made to put the best possible theatre within reach of the working people, with the co-operation of their trade union organizations. The Festival programme included *King Lear* (Municipal Theatre, Recklinghausen), *The Trial* (Municipal Theatre, Düsseldorf), *Die Kronbraut* (Theatre an der Wien), *La Folle de Chaillot* (German Theatre of Hamburg), *Der Freischütz* (Köln Municipal Theatre) and *Othello* (State Opera of Hamburg).

Nearly half a million people attended the Passion Play at Oberammergau. The last performance was given in 1934; subsequent revivals were prevented by the war.

The crisis through which our theatre is passing will not be resolved during the course of the winter. Nevertheless whenever it has been possible constantly to stimulate public interest, the effort displayed has received its reward. At Lübeck, audiences who live in the country round about, are conveyed to the performances by motor bus. The Residence Theatre in Münich, which has just been entirely done up, is already unable to deal with all the applications for membership. This shows that the public is tired of drill-halls and makeshift theatres and prefers a play given in spacious and elegant surroundings.

ILSEDORE POESCHEL.

ITALY

ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS. — Ugo Betti gave three new plays : *Lotta fino all' alba* (The Contest ends at Dawn), *Spiritismo nell' antica Casa* (Spiritualism in the OldHouse) and *Irene innocente* (Innocent Irene). Ruggero Ruggeri produced Giulio Viola's *Vita mea* (My Life) for the first time. The authentic talent of a young author, Diego Falbri, was revealed in his play *Inquisition*. Cesare Vico Ludovici's last dramatic work, *Santa Caterina da Siena*, was given in Rome and later in Sienna.

The greatest commercial success of last season was *The Man who came to dinner* by Moss Hart and Kaufman.

Strehler who put on *Richard II* in 1948, has now given *Richard III*. Certain critics pretend to discover in Strehler a " crisis " which urges him to a more synthetic conception of producing.

OPEN-AIR PERFORMANCES.— In the magnificent setting of the Greek theatre at Syracuse, the Institute of Ancient Drama gave Aeschylus' *The Persae* and *The Bacchantes* of Euripides, produced by Guido Salvini. Vittorio Gassman gave a sensational performance.

In Verona they have had *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Romeo and Juliet*, produced respectively by Brissoni and Salvini.

On the Ist September, to commemorate the death of Copeau, Orazio Costa, who was his pupil, staged *Le Petit Pauvre* in the Cathedral square at Milan.

FESTIVALS.— We have already mentioned the outstanding Theatre Festival promoted by the I.T.I. in Florence last May.

At the Festival in Venice they gave *La Dame aux Camelias* with Edwige Feuillère, *La Putta onorata* (The Respectable Prostitute) by Goldoni, produced by Strehler, Andrea Calmo's *Saltuzza* and *Parlamento* by Ruzzante, produced by Cesca Baseggio, and *La Paura numero uno* (Fear number one) by Eduardo de Filippo.

At the Olympic Theatre in Vicenza, the fourth centenary of the Italian author of the Renaissance, Giorgio Trissino, was celebrated with *Sophonisba* one of his tragedies in verse, produced in excellent taste by Strehler.

THE COMING SEASON.— The Piccoli Teatri will continue to function in Milan with Strehler, in Rome with Costa, and also in Naples. For five months, a

resident company will be playing in Rome under the direction of Guido Salvini. It will include some of the most talented actors of the younger generation; Gassman, Edda Albertini, and Vivi Gioi. The company will present mostly classical works.

Eduardo de Filippo occupies a special place in the Italian theatre because of his success both as an actor and as an author. *La Grande Magia* (The Great Magic), given in Rome on the 20th January was a great success, as was also *La Paura numero uno*, which, having been played for the first time in Venice, will inaugurate the winter season.

The touring companies also announce the resumption of their activities. We shall see those of Rina Morelli-Paolo Stoppa and Ruggero Ruggeri. Pagnani-Cervi's company will give *Harvey* for the first time, and Renzo Ricci *The Cocktail Party*.

TERENCIO.

MEXICO

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL.— In accordance with the desires of the I.T.I. the Dramatic Department of the Institute of Fine Arts organized an International Festival which opened on the 20th January 1950. This festival, the interest and importance of which is evident, comprised fourteen plays : *Rosalba y los Llaveros* (Rosalba and the Turnkeys) by the Mexican Emilio Carballido; *Une Viuda Dificil* (The Difficult Widow) by the Argentine Conrado Nalé Roxlo; *Trespass* by Emlyn Williams; *Medea* by Euripides; *The Man, the Beast and Virtue* by Pirandello; *The Mother* by Karel Capek; two Spanish plays, *The Marquise Rosalinda* by Valle-Inclan, and *The Fable of the Well-kept Secret* by Alejandro Casona; two American plays, *The Emperor Jones* by Eugene O'Neill and *The Little Foxes* by Lillian Hellman; and finally four French plays, *Morts sans Sépulture* by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement* by Prosper Mérimée, *Montserrat* by Emmanuel Robles and *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand.

It was the University Theatre of Havana who, specially invited for the occasion, interpreted the two Spanish works and *Medea*. The Teatro Aguileon gave *Trespass*, the Mexico City Players *The Little Foxes* and the Comédiens de France *Cyrano de Bergerac*, each in their original language. The other plays were entrusted to young Mexican actors and producers, graduates either of the School of Dramatic Art of the National Institute of Fine Arts, or of one or other of the experimental theatre companies.

In the course of last season two professional companies distinguished themselves particularly, the Ideal Company, formed by the National Union of Authors, in view of producing national works, and the Company of the Arbeu.

The Ideal Theatre produced four Mexican plays, *El Rancho de los Gavilanes* (The Farm of Vultures) by Ladislao Lopez Negrete, *El Don de la Palabra* (The Gift of Words) by Agustin Lazo, *Juego peligroso* (Dangerous Game) by Xavier Villaurrutia and *Noche de Estio* (Summer's Night) by Rodolfo Usigli.

The Arbeu Company lead off with *The Madwoman of Chaillot* by Giraudoux, followed by *A Man like the Rest* by Armand Salacrou, later they produced a Spanish comedy *Historia de una Escalera* (History of a Staircase) by Antonio Buero Vallejo, *El Cuadrante de la Soledad*, (The Dial of Solitude) by the Mexican Jose Revueltas, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* by Rudolf Bessier, and finally *Los Fugitivos* (The Fugitives) by the Mexican Rodolfo Usigli.

The Virginia Fabrigas Theatre is to be pulled down, to allow the building on the same site of a modern theatre with a revolving stage.

Thanks to the support of the National Institute of Fine Arts and its Dramatic Department, an experimental theatre has succeeded in taking root and developing itself in Mexico. The most living proof of this is the installation of six new theatres which are in constant activity. They are : the Snail Theatre, home of the " Prow " Company, directed by José de J. Acevos; the Latin-American Hall which has been occupied in succession by " The Actors of the New Generation ", directed by Celestino Gorostiza and the Company of San Diego under the direction of Dagoberto de Cervantès; the Guimera Hall where the "Art Theatre of Mexico " plays, directed by the actress Lola Bravo; the Sears Roebuck Auditorium which houses the " Universal Theatre " of Rafael Villegas; the Hall of Mexico City College, permanent home of the " Mexico City Players "; and the Molière Hall, of the French Institute of Latin-America, where the " Comédiens de France " are installed under the direction of André Moreau.

SALVADOR NOVO.

NETHERLANDS

The most important foreign plays produced in the Netherlands in the period 1st January till 1st July 1950 have been *The Three Sisters* (Tchekov) under the direction of Peter Scharof, *Les Mains Sales* (Sartre), *La Folle de Chaillot* (Giraudoux) and *Death of a Salesman* (Miller) which remain in the repertory of two companies for the season 1950-51.

Only one new Dutch play was performed : *Armada* by Jef Heydendael, but several new Dutch ballets were danced by different companies.

In this period the following foreign companies came over to Holland : the Old Vic with *Hamlet* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, the Young Vic with open-air performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Birmingham

L'INOUBLIABLE ANNÉE 1919, *de Vsévolod Vichnevski. Théâtre Central de l'Armée Rouge, Moscou. 1949-1950.*
Photo Cholomovitch.

THE UNFORGETTABLE YEAR 1919, *by Vsévolod Vichnevski. Central Theatre of the Red Army, Moscow. 1949-1950.*
Photograph by Cholomovitch.

VASTE STEPPE, *de V. Vinnikov. Mise en scène de A. Popov et A. Okourtchikov. Théâtre Central de l'Armée Rouge. 1949-1950.*
Photo Cholomovitch.

VAST STEPPE, *by V. Vinnikov. Produced by A. Popov and A. Okourtchikov. Central Theatre of the Red Army. 1949-1950.*
Photograph by Cholomovitch.

LE REVIZOR, *de Gogol. Mise en scène de Veniamine Tsygankov. Khlestakov est joué par Igor Iliinski. Théâtre Maly, Moscou. 1949-1950.* Photo Cholomovitch.

SADKO, *opéra de Rimsky-Korsakow. Mise en scène de N. Golovanov et B. Pokrovski. Décor de F. Fédorovski. Grand Théâtre de l'U.R.S.S. 1949-1950.* Photo Batanov.

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, *by Gogol. Produced by Veniamine Tsygankov. Khlestakov is played by Igor Iliinski. Maly Theatre, Moscow. 1949-1950.* Photograph by Cholomovitch.

SADKO, *opera by Rimsky-Korsakow. Produced by N. Golovanov and B. Pokrovski. Set by F. Fedorovski. Great Theatre of the U.S.S.R. 1949-1950* Photograph by Batanov.

Repertory Company with *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the Nottingham Playhouse Company with *The Rivals*, Jouvet with *L'École des Femmes* and *Knock*, the Oesterreichische Länderbühne Wien with *Kabale und Liebe* and *Diener zweier Herren*, the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo du marquis de Cuevas, Rosario and Antonio, Teresa and Luisillo, Solange Schwarz and her company.

On June 28th students of the Sorbonne performed at the Théâtre Hébertot in Paris parts of two plays : *Lucifer* and *Adam in Exile* by the famous Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) in a French translation by Jean Stals and under the direction of Johan de Meester. This performance was given under the auspices of the French and Dutch Ministries of Education.

During the Holland Festival the Netherlands Opera gave a first performance of the Dutch Opera *Philomela* (libretto by Jan Engelman, music by Hendrik Andriessen) with interesting settings by the painter Foelofs; and of *Oberon* (Weber) in a new setting by Hordijk.

In the beautiful courtyard of the ancient " Prinsenhof " in Delft, several open-air performances were given during the Holland Festival of the Dutch morality play Elkerlijck (Everyman) (1475).

This summer other open-air performances were given of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Shakespeare) and *Marieken van Nieumeghen*, a mediaeval morality play executed on the market-place of Nijmegen (the Nieumeghen of the play).

In Tegelen this summer the village population played their passion-play as they do every five years.

Members of the " Hague Comedy Company " went to the West-Indies, where they gave several performances.

The Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences has appointed Prof. Dr. L.-J. van Holk as president of the Netherlands Centre of the I. T. I.

H. W. Pleiter.

NORWAY

During May and June, the National Theatre in Oslo gave a new production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice;* Shylock was played vigourously and unconventionally by Olafr Havrevold, Portia beautifully and humourously by Tore Segelcke.

In connection with the nine hundred years jubilee of the town of Oslo, the same theatre gave Ibsen's comedy *De Unges forbund* (The League of Youth). This performance was repeated after the summer vacation, together with *Les Mains Sales* by Sartre and *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller. The theatre will shortly give *The Lady's not for Burning* by Christopher Fry, and *Solnes, the Master Builder* by Henrik Ibsen.

During the city's jubilee, the Norske Teatret in Oslo played Ibsen's *The Pretenders to the Throne.* Edvard Drabls has been directing the theatre since the beginning of September. His predecessor, Hans Jacob Nilsen, retired in order to organize the new Peoples'Theatre in Oslo, which is expected to open next year.

The Norske Teatret played *Show Boat* during May and June, and since the summer vacation has revived it's performances of *Peer Gynt* and given a new production of *The Wavering Lady* by Ludvig Holberg.

Before the holidays, the Nye Teater in Oslo gave a fascinating performance of *Les Bonnes* by Jean Genêt. Since then they have given three one-act plays by three Danish authors Leck Fischer, Soya and Knud Sonderby (translated by Hans Heiberg), as well as *Nina* by André Roussin, and *The Winslow Boy* by Terence Rattigan. They have also given remarkable performances of two of the chamber-operas by Gian-Carlo Menotti; Ann Brown in the leading part of *The Medium* made a very deep impression, and this production was subsequently taken to Gothenburg. Since the summer the theatre has had a great success with the comedy *The Farce of Love* by the two Norwegian authors Olaf Bull and Helge Krog.

The Studio Theatre (Studioteatret) in Oslo closed the spring season with a performance of Bjornstjerne Bjornson's comedy *When the New Wine Blossoms*, an excellent performance by young actors. Later they produced *Her Unknown Husband* by the Danish woman writer Sys Gauguin.

In September they gave *Peter the Fortunate* by Georges Neveux, and their autumn plans include among other things, Gorki's *The Lower Depths*.

Mentz Schulerud.

PERU

The theatrical season of 1950 opened at Lima on the 7th July. Since then, the National Theatre Company have presented *Dulcinée* by Gaston Baty, in collaboration with the Peruvian composer Olzmann, Paul Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Rudolf Bessier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, Nalé Roxlo's *The Sirene's Tail*, Maeterlinck's *Intérieur* and *Loys* by Bernardo Roca Rey.

Loys won the National Theatre Prize in 1949, and its presentation consequently provoked the greatest interest; the production was undertaken by the author's brother, Ricardo-Roca Rey, who a few months previously, with a group of amateurs, had presented *Maquillage* by the Peruvian poet Jorge Eielson and *Huis Clos* (No Exit) by J.-P. Sartre; the decor, which was remarkable, was the work of the Peruvian painter Juan M. Ugarte.

It only remains to be said that in Buenos-Aires, the Peruvian writer, Salazar Bondy has had a whole hearted success in farce, the medium in which he excels.

SWEDEN

A brief survey of theatrical activities must begin with *Brand*, Ibsen's touching play, superbly produced at the Dramatiska Teatern in Stockholm by Alf Sjoeberg, with Olof Widgren and Anita Bjoerk in the principal parts. Among other Scandinavian plays also given at the National Theatre we would mention Helge Krog's *Kom in*, H.C. Branner's *Ryttaren* (The Rider) and *Den Bergtagna* (The Changeling) by Victoria Benedictsson, presented in honour of her centenary. Among foreign plays at the same theatre, we saw *La Folle de Chaillot* (Giraudoux), produced by Olof Molander, and with the celebrated actress Tota Teje in the part of the Madwoman.

The Boulevard-Teatern presented *Plainte contre Inconnu* (Case against Persons unknown) by Georges Neveux, while the Blanche-Teatern and the Dramatiker-Studio gave respectively *Ung man goer visit* (A young man pays a visit) by Gustaf Hellstroem, and *Loenngaangen* (The Corridor) by Hjalmar Bergman, which showed the greatest originality.

Outside Stockholm, different Municipal Theatres have distinguished themselves in the following productions : at Helsingborg, *Shoemaker's Holiday* by Dekker; at Malmoe, *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller; at Norrkoeping, *Draussen vor der Tür* by Wolfgang Borchert; at Gothenburg, *Palabras Divinas* (Ramon del Valle-Inclan) produced by Ingmar Bergman, *The Squaring of the Circle* by Valentin Katajev, *Foerraedaren* (The Traitor) by Bengt Anderberg and *Upptaecktsresanden* (The Explorer) by Stig Dagerman — the latter two plays by young Swedish authors — and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The Riksteatern (Itinerant Theatre) presented Tennessee William's *Summer and Smoke*, and Upsala University gave an open air performance of *Hippolytus* (Euripedes).

At the open air theatres (and there are many of them in Sweden) under the auspices of the trade unions there have appeared this summer *Lucienne et le Boucher* (Marcel Aymé), *The Silver Whistle* (Robert McEnroe), and a play of subtle inflections, *Midsummer Night's Dream at the Almshouse*, by the well-known Swedish dramatist, Paer Lagerkvist. And finally the municipal authorities of Stockholm organized free entertainment in the parks, of concerts, ballets, theatrical performances, notable among them a dramatic monologue entitled *Quist* by Alf Henrikson, a piece of rare subtlety, which tells the story of an aged policeman.

For the coming season, the Dramatiska Teatern announces *Chéri* (Colette), *La seconde surprise de l'amour* (Marivaux), and a new play by Axel Strindberg called *Kunde haenda* (It might happen). At Gothenburg they will produce another new work by a young Swedish playwright, Bjoern-Erik Hoeijer called *Det Lyser i Kaaken* (Light in the Hovel).

AXEL STRINDBERG.

TURKEY

Three Turkish cities, Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir have repertory companies, subsidized either by the government or the municipality. They give regular performances every night of the week from the beginning of October to the end of April.

The theatre in Istanbul, besides giving quite a few revivals, made several notable additions to its repertory last season, including Giraudoux's *La Folle de Chaillot*, and the Chinese classic *The Chalk Circle*.

Two new Turkish comedies were produced at the Little Theatre of Ankara : *Small Town* by Baskut, and *The Envious One* by two young playwrights, Rifat and Anday.

Both Istanbul and Ankara opened the season last year with stage versions of *Faust* in honour of Goethe's bicentenary.

Ankara's Little Theatre showed modernistic tendancies. There was a spirited rendering of *The Mercator* by Plautus with grotesque miming to mark the intervals between the acts. Some of the best performances of the season were seen in Anouilh's *Antigone* and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

The Opera House of the Turkish capital is perhaps the most up-to-date in Europe, both for its technical facilities and its lighting equipment. Overlooking the park, it is one of the architectural landmarks of Ankara.

Faust was followed at the Opera House by Goldoni's *Liar*, Romains' *Doctor Knock*, Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and a lively production of *The Comedy of Errors*, as well as those operatic twins, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Carmen* and *Madame Butterfly*.

The State Opera had some guest singers last winter. Miss Florence Kirk, of the Metropolitan Opera House of New York, was a great success as Santuzza in *Cavalleria*. The Greek coloratura soprano Miss Kitsa Damassiotis won great popularity in the name part of *Carmen*, while Miss Atsuko Ito of Japan endeared herself to the public as Madame Butterfly.

The performances of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* by the State Opera while on a visit to Istanbul, were given at the open-air theatre which commands a lovely view of the Bosphorus, and created quite a sensation. Miss Zoë Vlachopoulos, of the Greek State Opera, was the guest singer in the name part of Madame Butterfly.

Folklore Festivals were held in August on the occasion of the International Meeting of the W.A.Y. (World Association of Youth) in Istanbul.

BRAND, *d'Henrik Ibsen. Mise en scène d'Alf Sjoeberg. Décor de Carl Johnsson-Cloffe. Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm. 1950.* Photo Sven Järlas.
BRAND, *by Henrik Ibsen. Produced by Alf Sjoeberg. Set by Carl Johnsson-Cloffe. Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm. 1950.* Photograph by Sven Järlas.

SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY, *de Thomas Dekker. Théâtre Municipal, Helsingborg. 1950.* Photo Lindberg.

SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY, *by Thomas Dekker. Municipal Theatre, Helsingborg. 1950.* Photograph by Lindberg.

Tora Teje dans LA FOLLE DE CHAILLOT, *de Jean Giraudoux. Mise en scène d'Olof Molander. Décor de Georg Magnusson. Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm. 1950.* Photo Järlas.

Tora Teje in THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT, *by Jean Giraudoux. Produced by Olof Molander. Sets by Georg Magnusson. Dramatiska Teatern, Stockholm. 1950.* Photograph by Järlas.

Two Turkish plays were produced abroad last season. *Time's Up*, C.F. Baskut's play about a superannuated school-teacher, was a great hit in Athens, and "Le Théâtre de Poche" gave Paris theatre-goers a rendering of V.N. Tor's *Blindman*.

The well-known dramatic critic of the London "News Chronicle", Mr. Alan Dent, visited Turkey on a lecture tour last spring.

At the time of writing, the only title yet announced for the coming season in Istanbul is Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Rumour has it that the neurotic Blanche will be played by Bedia Statzer, who celebrated her 25th anniversary on the stage a few weeks ago. She is recognized as one of the best actresses that Turkey has produced.

Ankara is to offer an array of masterpieces. The season will open with *Hamlet*. Some of the other plays under consideration are : Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, Montherlant's *Le Maître de Santiago*, Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*, Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenuntergang* and Lorca's *Blood Wedding*.

Opera-goers this season will hear *Rigoletto*, *Fledermaus*, *Tosca*, and *Tiefland* for the first time in Ankara.

ORHAN BURIAN.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The outstanding event in the period under review, was the visit to South Africa by the Flemish National Theatre Company. This was the first time in the history of South Africa that a foreign national theatre has toured this country, and the visit under the sponsorship of the Belgian Government and South Africa's own National Theatre Organization, augurs well for future tours of this nature. The Flemish players presented a repertoire of five programmes including Anouilh's *Antigone*. Their performances were enthusiastically received, particularly in Cape Town, where they gave six performances in four days at the University Little Theatre.

South Africa's own National Theatre is presently touring seven large cities with a production of Fleckers' *Hassan*. The English producer, Basil Dean, who introduced this play in London in 1923, came to South Africa to direct this, the only other professional performance of the play yet given in any country.

The Dramatic Department of the University of Cape Town organised a comprehensive Winter School in Theatre Arts during July, which was attended by some 90 students from all parts of the country, and in Cape Town too in July, was held the annual Play Festival and Conference of the Federation of Amateur Theatrical Societies of South Africa, an organization which represents over 200 amateur bodies throughout South Africa.

LEONARD SCHACH.

UNITED KINGDOM

A playgoer freshly arrived in Britain towards the end of August would have found himself pulled in three directions at once. The new theatrical season was opening in London, a little earlier than usual after the late summer gap; the fourth Edinburgh Festival presented new plays by James Bridie and Eric Linklater besides the Old Vic company's revival of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair;* and down at Stratford-upon-Avon the Shakespeare Festival, in its sixth month, offered some of the best acting in the country, with John Gielgud at the head of the cast.

The two Festivals drew a great deal of attention. It was announced in mid-season that the Stratford Memorial Theatre, which this year had opened early in March, would remain open until the end of October : a Festival record. John Gielgud, whose performances as Angelo, Cassius, Benedick, and— though there was controversy about this— as King Lear, have been the major excitements of the season, was leaving at the end of September to appear in New York as Mendip in Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning :* his Stratford parts, Lear excepted, would be taken during the last month by other members of the cast. It was stated also that at the close of the Festival Anthony Quayle, the Stratford Director, proposed to send the company to Germany for two weeks to play in three German towns in Peter Brook's production of *Measure for Measure*.

This revival of a difficult, bitter comedy, under a young producer, had held the Stratford theatre unsupported for a month during the spring, and Gielgud's Angelo— his first part on the Stratford stage— had been praised as an acute study in psychology, beautifully spoken. He followed this later with a fiery Cassius in *Julius Caesar* (Harry Andrews was the Brutus and Anthony Quayle the Mark Antony), and later played Benedick in his own treatment of *Much Ado About Nothing*, to the Beatrice of Peggy Ashcroft : this was the 1949 production, newly cast. Finally, there was *King Lear*, in a production directed by Gielgud and Anthony Quayle. Some critics held that Gielgud's Lear had matured into one of his noblest performances; others complained that he lacked pathos. Crowds booked every seat in the theatre to observe for themselves. The fifth play in the season was Tyrone Guthrie's superbly-handled revival of *King Henry the Eighth*, carried over from last year but now with Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies as Queen Katharine. Stratford, during the season, had another highly successful series of British Council lectures and courses. This form of theatrical education is very popular, as other courses (sponsored by the University of London and Dartington Hall) have showed.

At the Edinburgh Festival— three weeks against Stratford's eight months— three of the plays in the programme were given by the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, one of the best of British repertories, under the direction of John Casson, son of Sir Lewis Casson and Dame Sybil Thorndike. He directed his parents, as guest players, in what proved unexpectedly to be the triumph of the Festival : John Home's tragedy of *Douglas*, two hundred years old now and nearly forgotten except for a stray phrase, " My name is Norval," which— for no accountable reason— has lived on in dramatic history. *Douglas* was never more than a competent blank verse tragedy of its period, written by a Scottish clergyman : it owed its fame to the resounding personal success of Sarah Siddons (who took up the part some time after the first production) as Lady Randolph, the mother who finds a long-lost son only to lose him again within a few hours. Dame Sybil, in the Siddons part, showed why the play had once been honoured. She gave a performance most moving in its poise, dignity, and pathos.

The Citizens' Theatre brought across two new pieces to Edinburgh, each with the aid of a London player or players. One, *The Queen's Comedy*, by James Bridie, was a free handling of a book of the Iliad in which the Immortals influence the course of the Trojan War. It was a well-written though straggling piece, at its best in a last serious passage when Jupiter looks tolerantly upon the little universe he has moulded from a lump of Chaos. A third Festival play, by Eric Linklater, proved to be a modern pastiche of Ben Jonson's comedy of *The Alchemist*, a tale of a charlatan, his assistants, and their dupes : Linklater made from it a brisk and likeable farce. Ben Jonson, unaltered, appeared at Edinburgh in the roaring cauldron of *Bartholomew Fair*, a comedy of 1614 which was done capably by the Old Vic cast on a platform stage, and will be more effective still when it arrives in London during the autumn on a stage of another shape. At Edinburgh the Fair stalls had to be strung out at the back of the stage and there was sometimes an odd sense of remoteness and a lack of the continual bustle and fret which in this piece are essential.

The Old Vic company, it was said, would open during the autumn in its old London home in the Waterloo Road from which it has been absent for ten years. The war-damaged theatre has been repaired and refitted without loss of atmosphere. There a company that includes several Old Vic favourites of the past— among them, Peggy Ashcroft, Alec Clunes, Roger Livesey, Ursula Jeans, Robert Eddison— is to present three plays of Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry the Fifth*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor;* Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair;* Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, still one of the lesser-known comedies; and a double bill consisting of Tchehov's *The Wedding* and the *Electra* of Sophocles. It is likely that *The Merry Wives* will be done in the late spring of next year when an " all-star " cast will stage it as the Old Vic's contribution to the Festival of Britain.

In the West End of London lately, apart from new work which has been noted in the monthly Bulletin, there have been such events as a revival of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, and another of Pinero's famous " well-made " dramas of 1893, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. This is the tragedy of a woman with a past for whom the future can be only " the past again, entered through another gate ". The Paula of Eileen Herlie, usually an attacking actress, had less of the grand manner than some of her admirers had expected, but there were several sound performances with the correct period gloss, those especially by Leslie Banks, Marie Ney, and Ronald Ward. *Rosmersholm*, in a new and supple version by Max Faber, was competently done, though the Rebecca of Signe Hasso, a Swedish actress, lacked variety of intonation.

During the autumn some of the leading figures of the British theatre will be away from London. Sir Laurence Olivier and Lady Olivier (Vivien Leigh) are making films in Hollywood; Dame Edith Evans is going to New York in James Bridie's play, *Daphne Laureola;* and Dame Sybil Thorndike will be on tour in the Irish farce, *Treasure Hunt*. At the time of writing, most of the longrunning plays in the West End seem to be fairly stable. T.S.Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* has been at the heart of the summer season, though no play split playgoing and critical opinion more thoroughly. The main productions so far announced for the autumn are Tyrone Guthrie's experimental piece, *Top of the Ladder*, with John Mills, and a revival of *Macbeth*, with Godfrey Tearle in the part he played at Stratford-upon-Avon last year.

J. C. Trewin.

U. S. A.

Summer Theatres.— The United States has a characteristic form of theatre activities which differs radically from any seen on the continent or in England but which provides theatrical fare for a large public which might otherwise never have the opportunity of seeing live actors on a stage. The summer theatres are called " straw hat " theatres because many of them started their life in a re-conditioned hay-barn. When these seasonal organizations first came into being, they were modest affairs, manned by young actors, directors and technicians who banded together for three or four months of the summer to create theatre al fresco, to learn and practice their art in country surroundings and to provide light entertainment for vacationists. In recent years the nature of these summer theatres has changed radically. They have become almost completely professional in so far as the fact that they are run by directors with long experience in this particular form of entertainment and that the actors are members of Equity. Young actors still have their chance in the more informal setting of the country theatre, but the invasion of the Broadway and Hollywood star, travelling from one theatre to another playing the same leading role with a succession of resident companies, precludes any attempt at forming " young companies " or developing ensemble

groups during the summer months. Last summer, so the Herald Tribune reports, there were 225 summer theatres in operation in the United States, showing some seventy new plays and many hundred revivals, to an audience that paid eight million dollars for the privilege. These are staggering figures almost twice as were complied for the summer of 1949. Presumably these include attendance at festivals and " music circuses " as well as straight plays. At any rate, it is certain that there is a marked increase in summer theatre production and that a new tendency is discernable in the use of the summer theatres as try-out engagements for plays destined eventually for Broadway. Another trend which has gone so far that it may have over-reached its mark is the star system. This year some of the stars— particularly those with Hollywood reputations— have demanded such huge fees that the summer theatres could not possibly hold audiences large enough to pay the price demanded by these glittering luminaries.

Music Circuses.— The current enthusiasm for arena or central staging (which Margo Jones discusses elsewhere in this issue) has moved into the summer theatres in a new form. Last summer an enterprizing producer presented musical comedies in a circus tent with such success that the idea was instantly adopted by others. This year Broadway and summer theatre producers have pitched their tents like circus managers of old and such operettas as *The Song of Norway*, *The Chocolate Soldier*, *New Moon*, *The Vagabond King*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Show Boat* have been given under the " big top " with great success.

Summer Festivals.— The Berkshire Music Festival held every summer at Tanglewood in Lenox, Massachusetts, is the oldest and most professional of the growing array of musical, dramatic and artistic events that attract the traveller in the United States, whether he be a visitor from overseas or a tourist from another part of the country. The chief attraction at Tanglewood is the concerts given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the huge shed built by the architect Saarinen on the grounds of the beautiful estate in the Berkshire hills known as Tanglewood. But Tanglewood offers more than orchestral entertainment. The music school run in connection with the Festival provides the nucleus of interesting experiments in opera, concerts and ensemble. It was here that Benjamin Britten's two operas, *Peter Grimes* and *Albert Herring* were given their first American productions, and here rarely produced operatic works are presented with professional finish in a small opera house also designed along modern lines by the distinguished firm of Saarinen. This year's " first " —for America— was Jacques Ibert's comic opera *Le Roi d'Yvetot*, the composer being present in person.

In Central City Colorado a unique Festival is held every year in the old Opera House built in this now deserted mining town when it was the booming capital of the Colorado gold rush. The beautiful little opera house has been preserved intact and once a year the town comes to life when the foot-lights go up on performances by leading artists of the Broadway stage and of the Metropolitan Opera Company. Colorado is indeed an extraordinarily lively centre of artistic activity during the summer months. The Denver orchestra gives concerts in the great Red Rock open air theatre (a photograph of which adorned the entrance to the ITI Architectural Congress in Paris last summer). At the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Centre a music festival brings together leading composers, critics and performers from all over the country— and indeed the world— for six weeks of intensive study and enjoyment of modern music. ...In New England dance festivals at Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts and at New London, Connecticut have been attracting dance enthusiasts for a number of years. ...While, as already noted, theatres are to be found dotted all over the map where the spoken word vies with the fascinations of bathing, riding, tennis, golf and loafing for the attention of holiday makers.

Outdoor Theatre.— A new and interesting development in the festival line is the growing interest shown in outdoor theatre of a special kind. Stemming from the pageant but leaning more toward drama, the new form developed particularly by the playwright Paul Green is called by its author " symphonic drama ". Paul Green, author of *In Abraham's Bosom*, *The House of Connelly*, *Johnny Johnson* and other plays with a strong American flavor, has now written three major works reflecting the history and growth of the American people and making use of large outdoor stages, hundreds of performers, choruses and dance groups. His first " symphonic drama ", concerning the first settlers in North Carolina, is called *The Lost Colony* and is presented every year on Roanoke Island on the very spot where the tragic and dramatic events related in the play took place. Later Mr. Green dramatised the events leading to the founding of the United States in a drama with music and dance, called *The Common Glory*, which is presented every year in Williamsburg, Virginia, not far from the home of its hero, Thomas Jefferson. This year in connection with the sesquicentenial celebration of the founding of the City of Washington, Mr. Green produced a mighty work depicting crucial moments in the life of George Washington. A new outdoor amphitheatre was built in Rock Creek Park in Washington for this drama called *Faith of Our Fathers*.

On Broadway.— Theatre activities were at a minimum during the summer months but a number of hits held their own. It was as difficult as ever to get seats for *South Pacific*, which is still graced by the presence of Mary Martin, with Ray Middleton successfully replacing the popular opera singer Ezio Pinza who has left for Hollywood. *Death of a Salesman*, *The Member of the Wedding*, *Come Back Little Sheba*, *The Wisteria Trees* continued to draw summer audiences, while *The Cocktail Party* and *Mister Roberts* were to be seen both in London and New York simultaneously. Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Consul* was joined by his *The Medium* and *The Telephone* providing nerve shattering entertainment to theatre goers in an intimate arena theatre production in one of New York's larger hotels.

Forecast.— The new season is opening with a spate of English plays : James Bridie's *Daphne Laureola* starring Edith Evans will be followed shortly by Flora Robeson in *Black Chiffon* and George Relph

with Valerie Taylor in *The Giaconda Smile*. John Gielgud after a brilliant season in Stratford will bring Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning* to New York in November. Other English imports include *Miss Mabel*, *Adventure Story* by Terence Rattigan, *Traveller's Joy*, and others. From France, via England we are promised Anouilh's *Invitation au Château* called *Ring Round the Moon*. Among other interesting prospects for a season that has begun rather lamely with a new play by Garson Kanin called *Live Wire*, are new plays by Elmer Rice, John Van Druten, George Kaufman and Tennessee Williams.

ANTA.— The American National Theatre and Academy has been active on both sides of the Atlantic. Besides being responsible for U.S. participation in the ITI Third Congress in Paris in June, it sponsored the tour of the American National Ballet Theatre in England, Germany, France, Italy, etc. and is planning to bring Louis Jouvet and his company to New York in February. ANTA has also launched a subscription season at its new Playhouse in New York and is at work on plans for a National Theatre Assembly to be held in Washington D.C. in January 1951.

ROSAMOND GILDER.

U. S. S. R.

We owe to the kindness of the Sovinformburo the information contained in these notes.

The Moscow theatres reserve an important place in their programmes for new plays which reflect the life and activities of Soviet citizens under the Stalin regime; plays which extol the struggle of the Soviet people to build a communist society, for peace, for true democracy and for a radiant future.

The last theatre season was therefore distinguished by a series of particularly interesting productions.

The Central Theatre of the Red Army gave *The Unforgettable Year* 1919 by Vsevolod Vichnevski. The action takes place at Moscow, Petrograd, Cronstadt and at the front, at the time when the White Guard were trying to capture Petrograd, the cradle of the Russian Revolution, where the Central Committee had delegated Joseph Stalin. This play is a tribute to the heroism of the Russian people, to the brotherhood in arms of the great Revolutionary leaders, Lenin and Stalin, and to Stalin's ability in overcoming all difficulties.

The Stalin Prize was awarded to *Vast Steppe* by the young dramatic author V. Vinnikov, presented at the Central Theatre of the Red Army by A. Popov and A. Okourtchikov. It recounts the struggle of the peasantry on the collective farms to obtain better crops; the chief character is the journalist Strepet, who personifies the self-criticism which is the driving force of Soviet society.

A. Moussatov has written a play on the same theme, *The Precious Grain*, produced by the Central Theatre for Children, which pays tribute to the participation of Soviet school-children in the harvesting of the collective farms.

The same theatre has shown *I want to go home* by Serguei Mikhalkov. This is the story of children carried into captivity in Germany by the Nazis, unjustifiably kept there after the end of the war and finally discovered by a joint commission appointed at the instance of the Soviet High Command.

Among the new plays of last season we must also mention *The Plot of Discarded Men* by N. Virta, staged by the Vakhtangov Theatre. *A Foreign Shadow* by C. Simonov, and *Ilya Golovine* by S. Mikhalkov, both given at the Arts Theatre.

But, apart from contemporary plays, or plays treating historical subjects designed to remind the Russian people of their glorious past, the Soviet theatres do not neglect revivals. Some of the Russian and foreign classics have been played practically without interruption all through the past season : Gogol, Ostrovski, Gorki, Tchekov, Tolstoi, Turgeniev, Shakespeare, Schiller, Dickens and Balzac.

The Maly Theatre distinguished itself particularly by a revival of Gogol's *The Government Inspector* produced by Veniamine Tsygankov, laureate of the Stalin Prize. The Arts Theatre has revived Gorki's *Little Townsfolk* which was first produced on this same stage in 1902 or nearly fifty years ago.

In the domain of ballet we must mention a new production of *The Red Poppy* at the Grand Academy Theatre of Moscow. This ballet portrays the struggle of the Chinese people for liberation; its author is R. Glier, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. The same theatre has revived Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko*, with a new production which won the Stalin Prize; it is the story of a poet, and a wonderful "gusli" player who never ceases dreaming of great journeys. He is an object of mockery to his fellow citizens, the merchants of Novgorod, till the day he brings home wealth and glory.

In a future review we will speak of the theatre outside Moscow. But we must mention at once the exchange of companies, between one theatre and another, which took place last summer. While the Maly Theatre of Moscow were giving a season in Kiev, they lent their stage to the Ukranian Company of Ivan Franko. The Vakhtangov Theatre made a stay in Minsk and the Mossoviet Theatre went to Odessa. The Theatre of Communist Youth, under the direction of Ivan Bersenev paid a visit to Baku and took advantage of it to rehearse the play *Khandar* by the Azerbajanese poet, Samed Vourgoune, the subject of which is in fact Stalin's revolutionary activity in Baku.

On the occasion of its bicentenary, the Volkov Theatre of Yaroslav gave some of its finest productions in Moscow. The Light Opera of Leningrad and the National Opera of Esthonia also came to Moscow. All these journeys occasioned the most fruitful meetings and debates.

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